No.14

FOR READERS OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS
AND PLAYERS OF *'CALL OF CTHULHU'*

75p

DAGON

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THE PLAIN OF SOUND
by Ramsey Campbell

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This issue of Dagon
is dedicated to the memory of

TOBY TOBIAS

A little monster who I loved most dearly

IN THE VAULT

Upon first glance this issue will appear to be a potpourri of Mythos pieces, but actually there is an underlying theme. This issue concentrates on posing the question "How to develop a better Mythos?" both in terms of understanding the Mythos from a scholarly angle and also by attempting to help improve one's *Cthulhu* campaign.

I am particularly proud to present several "big names" this time round, whose roles in the development of Mythos study and fiction have been fundamental in "spreading the word", as it were, to audiences far and wide.

At the scholarly end we have Robert M. Price, whose two essays "What is the Cthulhu Mythos?" and "Lessons from Lovecraft for Writers" attempt to clarify exactly what makes for a good Lovecraftian Mythos. Both pieces were originally the subjects of college lectures. Since then they have been revised, specially for *DAGON* and appear in print for the first time.

On the fictional front I am extremely happy to give readers the chance to read one of those rarer Ramsey Campbell Mythos tales. "The Plain of Sound" is typical of those early Mythos pieces found within the 1964 Arkham House collection, *The Inhabitant of the Lake and Less Welcome Tenants*. Whilst the tale doesn't approach the high standards of Ramsey's later works (both Mythos and otherwise), it does maintain its youthful charm which managed to come across strongly in Ramsey's teenage fiction and shows how heavily Lovecraft influenced the man in his early days of horror fiction. The tale is a particular favourite of mine, due to its ability to constantly remind me of the outlandish imagery of the greatest science fiction show to have been made - "The Outer Limits" As I read the tale I can almost see the presenter of that famed show saying "Do not adjust your television set" - In fact this quote is quite appropriate, read the tale and you'll see why.

In a different vein we have another scholar back on board - Sandy Petersen. This issue Sandy discusses (amongst other Things) his favourite horror movies and attempts to show how horror films can lend themselves to scenario outlines.

So step down into the dark dungeons at *DAGON* and see what other dreadful devils dwell with dehydrated dentures.....

Insanely as always, Carl Ford.

Editorial

HERO OF DREAMS

"Thankyou so much..."
My hero had spoken to me at last.
I had softly reached out my hand and my hero tenderly clasped it with sincerity.
A brief encounter, but one I shall fondly remember for the rest of my days
Such was my admiration for one of the men who has given me the most pleasure in my life.
His name.... *Peter Cushing.*

I was aged just 10 years old, when Peter Cushing first "entertained" me and what an experience it was. I was taking advantage of a Friday night and "persuaded" my parents to let me stay up and watch "Frankenstein". At first they refused, but they must have known it would only be a small matter of time before I noticed that horror films had a distinct possibility of turning up on television late at night. Knowing my fascination for the weird and mysterious, they agreed if only to stop my tears of sadness and loud sobs, which swiftly pursued their first decision on the matter. I have a good memory when it comes to such things, the film was on ITV at 10.30 pm. "The X film" the trailer proudly declared. My eyes lit up, awaiting the title....

The Revenge of Frankenstein

A wide grin, spread across my face. A "true" horror film at last, I thought to myself. The opening frames featured a guillotine and "Baron Frankenstein", who was apparently due to get the chop. I watched closely. I looked hard at the "hero" so this was Peter Cushing. I immediately fell in love with the man.

To be honest I didn't really think much of the film at the time, everything was a little above my undertanding. I couldn't quite fathom why the monster didn't look like the Boris Karloff pictures in my 1973 book entitled *A Pictorial History of Horror Movies* - which still stands beside me as I type. Nor could I undertand why the creature didn't viciously attack his victims or the Baron for that matter. Towards the end of the film I saw him lunge at one or two people but that was that - What happened to their bodies. I didn't appreciate that the monster in this film was, in fact, a cannibal. All these things, I learned later, when I swiftly built up a solid horror magazine collection.

From that day on, I collected everything I could find on Peter Cushing and a few months later another movie turned up - *Dracula Has Risen From the Grave* starring Christopher Lee, sadly no sign of Peter Cushing, though. Not to worry I managed to cry my way into that one too, deciding that this course of "bluff" action was a winner. I was hooked on "Hammer" from that point on. I have seen every "Hammer" film that deals with a horror theme, which has popped up on the television over the course of the last 13 years. I lie, actually I missed one, *The Evil of Frankenstein* aired on a mid-week, even my tears didn't pull me through that one. "No, you've got school in the morning" I can hear my father saying.

So if any reader happens to have a video copy of *Evil* lying around.....

I have waffled on a bit, haven't I. Sorry. So what am I getting at. Well going back to the start of this editorial, I mentioned the fact that I was so happy to have finally met my "hero" - in fact, the event was only recently at a special Peter Cushing Guardian Lecture given at the NFT. I had waited the last thirteen years to show my appreciation. Thank God I finally did. Your heroes don't get any younger, you know. We all have to go away at some point in time. But how nice to let them know that they are held in such high esteem, while they live.

The point? Heroes are to be honoured! Don't just sit at home reading your novels, watching those films, or whatever else that involves appreciation of one person's work. Do something... Write a letter of appreciation on that latest book which thrilled you so much. Congratulate the man who made you quiver in your television armchair or cinema seat. Get about, attend those conventions. Meet your idols. Let them know how much you love their work. You'll be happier for it and if my experience with my hero was anything to go by, they will be delighted that you care.

What Is The Cthulhu Mythos?

by Robert M. Price

I.

Introduction

Besides his actual stories and the enjoyment and thought they provoke in new generations of readers, Lovecraft's second greatest legacy to the weird fiction tradition was no doubt the "Cthulhu Mythos." This set of grisly gods and blasphemous books has provided a framework for many horror writers to cut their teeth and work out their writing skills. The problem, of course, is that so much "Mythos fiction" seems light-years removed from Lovecraft's, both in vision and in skill. And the decline was a swift one, right after Lovecraft's death.

We want to examine briefly HPL's legacy of the Cthulhu Mythos, what it was, how it was and what happened to it after HPL.

II.

In Lovecraft's Day

The Philosophy Behind the Mythos

Lovecraft was basically a nihilist and a materialist. That is, he felt that there was no reality that natural law and matter could not account for. Everything worked like one big machine. There was no God, no soul, no meaning of purpose. Why, you might wonder, did Lovecraft not kill himself? He *did* contemplate it from time to time, but what always kept him from it was curiosity and beauty. He felt sure that the universe was just a collection of "stuff", but he had to know *more* about it. He hang on the news of the latest discoveries of science. And he felt the world, including most of the creations of humanity, were so beautiful as to make us pause for a lifetime to savor them.

So HPL saw an ultimate void of utter meaninglessness, but he also could not help but see a *pen*ultimate world of fascination and beauty. We must understand this in order to understand his major fiction. I think it is fair to say that his major works can be divided into two groups, each of which depicts, as it were, one-half of his worldview.

First, there are the "Dunsanian" or "Dream World" fantasies. In these, the brighter side of Lovecraft's philosophy is uppermost. This is nowhere more clear than in the *Dream-Quest*, where he "spills the beans" at the story's end. The visits of supreme beauty Randolph Cater has pursued is none other than the New England cities so loved by HPL himself — Salem, Marblehead, Providence, Boston.

Yet in this story we are not allowed to forget that the happy and sunny "reality" of the dream-gods is subordinate to "the Other Gods" — blind, mindless, tenebrous monsters, whose ultimate throne is chaos! Every silver cloud, for Lovecraft, has a black and stormy lining!

Second, there are the Cthulhu Mythos tales. Here HPL has taken off the gloves. He means to confront his characters (and his readers) with the awful truth — that the Universe is indifferent to man and in its blind, mechanical way will finally crush him like we crush an ant without ever knowing, making him as extinct as the dinosaur. In the stories, these merciless, superhuman forces of nature are symbolized by the "Great Old Ones," Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth, Shub-Niggurath, Nyarlathotep. They are going to destroy us, not because they hate us, but because we are in their way.

HPL's characters gradually come to discover their danger by piercing together isolated scraps of knowledge — Armitage decoding Wilbur Whateley's diary and collating it with the *Necronomicon*; Angell puzzling over his uncle's files and connecting it with a news clipping; Charles Dexter Ward discovering his ancestor Curwin's journal and comparing it with old newspapers and genealogies. Sometimes it is actual scientific or archaeological research which opens the door to oblivion, as in "Dreams in the Witch-House" and *At the Mountains of Madness*.

At any rate, the idea is summed up at the beginning of "The Call of Cthulhu":

> The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The

> sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

What sort of "scientific revelations" is HPL talking about? Weapons of destruction like the H-Bomb? No, this is to miss the point. He means not the destruction of the world, but the destruction of our world*view*. Science would reveal the utter insignificance of humanity's place in the scheme of things. In fact, HPL believed that it already *had*!

He wrote of the disorientation caused by Copernicus and Darwin. Copernicus told us that our home the earth was *not* the centre of things. We are out on the rim, stuck off on a speck of dust orbiting a middling star in a minor galaxy.

Darwin discovered that we are not qualitively removed from and superior to the animals, as we had always thought. Man, then, is neither the centre nor the ruler of creation, but only a comic biped lost in a cosmic whiff of flotasam and jetsam.

This news can be just as shocking and disorienting as Lovecraft said it must be. Witness the struggle of the medieval church to silence Copernicus and of modern fundamentalists to combat Darwinism. They are, as HPL said, fleeing into a new dark age of superstition.

Sometimes HPL symbolizes the blind impartiality of the universe as the Old Ones, especially Azathoth. Sometimes there is no threat of destruction by alien life; it is merely knowledge of their existence (as in *At the Mountains of Madness*) that dwarfs us. Sometimes it is knowledge of the frightful secrets of the past that destorys us (as in *Charles Dexter Ward* or "Rats in the Walls").

What was Lovecraft's own reaction to the shattering revelation of human insignificance? He did not retreat into any "new dark age." We have already seen what he did; he stoically accepted the bitter truth and turned instead to the beauty of nature and architecture, and to fantasy and imagination. This is most clear in the semi-autobiographical "The Silver Key".

What Kind of Thing is the Mythos?

Dirk Mosig has pointed out that "the Cthulhu Mythos" refers to a set of *lore*, not a set of stories. The various stories all *draw on* this lore (as well as other sources) but they do not *belong to* the Mythos. many writers and fans have ignored this crucial distinction, and the result has been complete chaos, as we will see a bit later.

Anyway, what elements *belong* to the Mythos, as Lovecraft knew it?

1. *Gods*: a. Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth, Shub-Niggurath, Nyarlathotep. These appear in Lovecraft's own stories.

   b. Ghatanothoa, Rhang-Tegoth, Yig, Nug and Yeb, Gnoph-Keh, Kthun, Noth-Yidik. Created in "Revision Tales".

   c. Tsathoggua, Nyogtha, Gol-Goroth (*possibly* Chaugnar Faugn). Created by other members of the Lovecraft Circle.

2. *Books*: *Necronomicon*, *De Vermis Mysteriis*, *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, *Cultes de Goules*, *Book of Eibon*, etc.

We should probably *not* include HPL's various locations (Leng, Arkham) or his alien races (Outer Ones, Elder Ones, etc.), since these usually represent the demythologized equivalents of Mythos dieties.

In his lifetime, HPL presided over the elaboration of the Mythos by his friends. These (Howard, Smith, Kuttner, Bloch, Long) often lacked the philosophic punch of Lovecraft, but did keep the basically pessimistic tone. With August Derleth, things began to change for the worse.

III.
The Derleth Mythos

"All my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based un the fundamental lore or legend that this world was inhabited at one time by another race who, in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside ever ready to take possession of this earth again."

Of course, any reader of Lovecraft knows that his tories are *not* based on such a premise. There is no real indication of the cosmic struggle of good vs. evil that is implied here, that of "Elder Gods" who punished the Great Old Ones for "practicing black magic".

Instead, all this represents August Derleth's ideas. And though Derleth constantly attributed both the quote and the business about the Elder Gods to Lovecraft, HPL is responsible for neither.

Derleth's Revisionism

Derleth set to work shortly after Lovecraft's death, trying to systematize Lovecraft's Mythos. But instead of systematizing it, he added much of his own "mythos":

He added the Elder Gods and made Cthulhu and his brethren analogous to Satan.

He made the Old Ones into conventional "elemantals" of earth, air, fire, and water.

He added many new Old Ones: Hastur, Lloigar, Zhar, Ithaqua, Cthugha.

He complicated the Mythos by seeing stories as *belonging to* the Mythos, with the result that any element mentioned in a "Mythos Story", drawn from whatever other source, was drawn into the Mythos — e.g., Ubbo-Sathla, The Hounds of Tindalos, The Serpent Men of Valusia, Umr-at-Tawil, etc., etc.

In creating the "Elder Gods", Derleth was, in effect, confusing the relation between HPL's Cthulhu and Dunsanian cycles. He took Nodens and the Mighty Ones from "Strange High House in the Mist" and set them against Cthulhu and the Old Ones from "Call of Cthulhu". Lovecraft had been a simple nihilist, but Derleth made it all into an ethical dualism. This tended to trivialize the stories, giving them *deus-ex-machina* endings, with Elder Gods charging over the hill to save humanity. It is difficult to tell how much this is to be blamed on Derleth's mythos or his atrociously bad writing.

Needless to say, the Mythos has grown by leaps and bounds since Derleth, *but according to Derleth's pattern, not Lovecraft's.* The Elder Gods have begun to multiply even as the Old Ones did (e.g., Kthanid). There are more and more Old Ones (Lumley's Bugg-Shash, Shudd-M'ell, Yibb-Tstll; Carter's Zoth-Ommog, Ythogtha; Campbell's Glaaki, etc., etc.). More servitor races (the Yuggs, Yog-Sothoth's fleas, etc.). More books: *Ponape Scripture, Cthaat Aquadingen*, etc.

The mysteriousness of it all has been lost, especially when writers follow Derleth's example of inserting mini-catalogues of Mythos data into their stories — e.g., *Burrowers Beneath*, Zoth-Ommog".

Such writers are merely writing "Mythos Fiction", not truly Lovecraftian fiction. It is not and cannot be much above the level of comic book science fiction: The Galactica crew vs. The Cylons.

HPL's philosophical hoplessness, the real secret of his horror, is lost. The human race is again placed in the centre of things: as in theistic religions, our world is the stage of diving/demonic conflict. The human race is a prize so great that even gods contest for it.

HPL's sense of mystery is gone. He used his ancient grimoires as symbols of unrevealed mysteries: mere glimpses of their terrible truth is enough to send one off to the madhouse. But "Mythos" writers use the grimoires as textbooks, explicit in every detail. The "Mythos" is a new science, like computer technology, and the hero may master it. This is all sci-fi melodrama.

If "Mythos" fiction is not Lovecraftian, where is any fiction being written in a genuinely Lovecraftian vein? I would suggest two works: Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* and T. E. D. Klein's *The Ceremonies*, both of which deal with the eruption into mundane reality of superhuman forces threatening sanity, i.e., threatening our comforting worldview.

* * * * *

Robert M. Price is a qualified teacher of Religious Studies, and is publisher for Cryptic Publications in the USA. Well known for being the editor of *Crypt of Cthulhu* and *Faith and Thought* (an American theological journal), Bob also has had numerous work published in other magazines, including *Playboy* and *The Twilight Zone*.

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The Acolyte

by Sandy Petersen

Welcome to the Acolyte. Sorry about missing last issue, but my own copy of *DAGON #12* was sent here by banana boat, and I didn't get it until well after the deadline. *sigh* Hope y'all didn't miss me. But here I am for #14. *Gaslight* was right on schedule, and is now available. For those of you who weren't here two issues ago (for shame!), I'm talking about *Cthulhu by Gaslight*, a boxed pack for playing *Call of Cthulhu* in the Gay '90s.

Gaslight costs $19.95 in the USA, and is boxed. There is only a single scenario, but it is quite extensive — practically a campaign. In it, you must clear Sherlock Holmes's older brother from a murder charge, face Sebastian Moran (& co.), and deal with Dr. Watson.

Dreamlands was released in May. It, too, is boxed, and costs $24.95 in the USA. It includes a full-size map of the Dreamlands, new spells, creatures, and six scenarios.

Spawn of Azathoth (formerly titled Throne of Azathoth) is now available. The investigators have a choice of sides: should they aid Eibon the sorcerer or Nemesis the destroyer. Nemesis, of course, threatens the world's existence. But Eibon's mad plan to save the world, forged eons ago, is almost as nasty.

Carl asked me to comment upon Reverend Falwell's "Moral Majority." I'm sure you'll all be glad to know that, so far as I can tell, it hasn't ever heard of *Call of Cthulhu*. There are several reasons for this. First, let's face it, *Call of Cthulhu* doesn't have the audience that D&D does. You can't buy *Call of Cthulhu* in bookstore chains (yet) or airport terminals. About 20,000 copies of the game have been sold in the USA — maybe a fiftieth as many as D&D. Second, *Call of Cthulhu* appeals to an older audience. Many players are college students. In my own campaign, the average player-age is over 30. Most D&D players are in their early to late teens — they're still at home, and their parents are still responsible for them. Their mother is unlikely to know anything about D&D except what she can deduce from hearing her offspring talk about "hit points," "demons," and "9th level spells." What's she to think? So naturally she's worried and fair game for the anti-D&D lies. Third, *Call of Cthulhu* players are well-read. Most of us come from homes where reading and education are encouraged. It's been my experience that idiots like the type that condemn role-playing games are generally *not* well-educated. Some even glory in the fact. SO our folks don't mind our playing *Call of Cthulhu*, and don't sound off to the anti-D&D crew, who then never hear about us.

Please don't mistake me. I am deeply religious and an active member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. However, one of my faith's tenets is that "The glory of God is intelligence," a belief that the sects which condemn role-playing games, rock music, and dancing, could do well to emulate.

Okay, time to get off the soapbox.

I forget who suggested this, ((I think it was me - ed.)) but as I write, my twelve favourite horror movies of all time, ranked alphabetically, are:

THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES
ALIEN *
ERASERHEAD *
THE EXORCIST
FRANKENSTEIN
GODZILLA
THE CONQUEROR WORM (I believe this was called "Witchfinder General" in UK.)
THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE (Titled "The Haunting" in UK.) *
JAWS
THE (original) MUMMY
PSYCHO *
VIDEODROME

This list, of course, changes from mood to mood. Nevertheless, the four movies marked with the "*" are always on the list.

THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES: a classic from the early 70's. Vincent Price has a ball (as will his fans) stalking elegantly around his Art Deco secret hideout and knocking off his enemies in wonderfully imaginative ways, and to music! One reviewer remarked that it's "a horror movie that feels like a musical." It takes place in the 1920's, and adaption to *Call of Cthulhu* should be a piece of cake. Inspector Trout would make a fine role-model for any Cthulhu investigator. The only supernatural features in the movie are Vulnavia, who might well be a creation of the Doctor's imagination; and Dr. Phibes' divine madness. Don't miss the sequel DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN. Incidentally, Dr. Phibes holds two doctorates: in Music, and Theology.

ALIEN: an all-time great, with a marvelous Cthulhoid monster. As mentioned in *DAGON #12* easily converted to *Call of Cthulhu*.

ERASERHEAD: a member of that rare breed — a worthwhile experimental movie. This is a hard movie to describe, and, sadly, impossible to adapt as a whole to *Call of Cthulhu*. You may want to steal the idea of Henry's awful child, or give an (insane) investigator his own Woman in the Radiator. The whole movie is one long symphony of despair, madness, and frustration. It's great. Oh yes, it's haunted too — every time I've seen ERASERHEAD it's been different — parts of the film have been left out or added. Weird.

THE EXORCIST: another classic that practically everyone's seen. Started the genre, of course. If adapted straight for *Call of Cthulhu*, there wouldn't be much for investigators to do, so you'll need to jazz it up. Also, half the point of the movie is that nobody believes (at first) what's going on. That would be lost on investigators, so you might want to provide a few alternative possibilities.

FRANKENSTEIN: clearly the finest of the man-made monster films. Colin Clive is the greatest as the mad scientist. Can be easily adapted straight to *Call of Cthulhu*, except that you'll have to change all the names — "Frankenstein" and "Igor" are by now so well known, they're almost banal.

THE CONQUEROR WORM: I believe this was called WITCHFINDER GENERAL in Britain. This is one of the few movies in which Vincent Price actually bothers to *act* rather than simply enjoy himself (not that anyone minds in a marvelous picture such as DR. PHIBES). It takes place during the English Civil War, as I recall, so is rather difficult to adapt wholesale to *Call of Cthulhu*. But the image of a world gone mad endures. A villianous anti-Cthulhu investigator such as Mathew Hopkins would be a great gist for a scenario.

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE: the finest haunted house or ghost movie ever made, without reservation. And you never see a single ghost. There's a whole team of investigators too. The only problem is that there seems to be no solution to the problem of this particular haunted house. But if your players are game for the fun and horror of it, rather than for tawdry success, this would be a great scenario, as well as a good way to introduce new players or investigators to the supernatural.

JAWS: this movie was according to strict horror-story rules. First, we see the monster eating random people. Then the protagonist believes in the monster, but the foolish authorities won't listen to him. Then he, with a couple of companions, are out there Alone with the creature, and after much danger and exitement, they manage to dispose of it. You can follow this plotline in *Call of Cthulhu* with great success, though you may want to use different monsters in different scenarios. Other movies which used this plotline include PROPHECY, HUMANOIDS FROM THE DEEP, CHUD, THE BEING, THE HORROR OF PARTY BEACH, and so on, and so on, and so on. But JAWS did a better job than most.

THE (original MUMMY: if you haven't seen this movie, you're in for a surprise. The mummy of the title doesn't shuffle mindlessly around, seeking tana leaves and strangling people one-handed. He's a diabolic being who kills with sorcery, dresses in normal clothes, and walks around Cairo in broad daylight. A great choice of enemy for your investigators, especially if they've released him from his millenia-old slumber themselves. Choose the most pulchritudinous female investigator for his prey — unless your mummy has something on his mind besides love. Takes place in the right time period too.

PSYCHO: in my opinion, the most frightening movie ever made.

VIDEODROME: David Cronenberg, who directed this film is, I'm sure destined to make a truly great horror movie. Every one he's filmed to date has fallen short, but someday ...

(Continued on page 18)

Great Zimbabwe

Great Archaeological Sites: The Truths
by Prof. Simon Davreau (Oxford)

A long abandoned city of stone stands alone upon the grassy savannas of northern Zimbabwe, once Rhodesia. Its people are fled; now only lions prowl its byways. The vast city walls, now tumbled, were constructed entirely without mortar, bearing mute testimony to the engineering skill of the race that built them. The sheer size of Zimbabwe is overwhelming, and hauntingly out of place in a land whose only other native architecture is the simple and timeless mud hut.

When Europeans first stumbled across the ruins of this gargantuan metropolis in the late 1800's, they believed that they had at last discovered the legendary mines of the fabled King Solomon. Karl Maunch, the German geologist who actually discovered the megalithic ruins, was the first to put forward this claim in the hope of obtaining both fame and fortune. Alas, he received only ridicule for his pains More recently, scientists have hypothosized the existance of a powerful African trading nation, whose civilisation collapsed less than 500 years ago. However, if this nation truly existed, why then have we not unearthed more evidence to support this fabulous claim? Furthermore, if the titanic ruins *were* once the capital of a vast empire, why do the local African natives blanch and fall silent whenever Zimbabwe is mentioned? Why do they refuse to go near the disordered remains? Why do the whisper dark tales from antiquity that tell of brave and fearless hunters who dared to investigate the crumbling ruins, and who were struck down by "lightning bolts" whilst still hundreds of feet from the city? And more importantly, why are the few stairs that still exist in the strange city built on a scale far too narrow for *human* feet?

When exploring the ruins today, a vague sense of unease makes itself felt upon the investigator. Great Zimbabwe's sheer size is disturbing - the tumbled walls stretch over a wide area, and the actual masonry is composed of titanic blocks of stone. It is this fact that most impresses the casual observer, for whoever the original builders of the city were, their technical skills easily rival those of today's craftsmen. Great blocks of granite form the outer walls, each weighing many tonnes. As noted previously, every one of these blocks, in the entire city be they large, small, minute or megalithic, are placed together without any mortar whatsoever; and so carefully that many seem to actually grow from out of the very ground upon which they stand.

To the methodical examiner there are many details, which, although seemingly minor when taken by themselves, add up to something quite disturbing. There are walls which stand 35 feet high and some 17 feet thick, which bulge and curve in a hideously suggestive manner; tall, flat-topped towers of layered stone, with no trace of doors or windows, let alone rooms; narrow, winding passageways, that twist and double back so that the novice becomes completely disoriented; walls with no logical purpose. An overview of the site gives one a glimpse into something totally alien and distorted, constructed upon principals of geometry and design that no human mind would ever conceive...

I, for one, can never be at ease among the discordant stones of Zimbabwe, for always I feel the gaze of malevolent eyes upon me, and notice secretive scuttlings from the corners of my eyes. No wonder that Zimbabwe is abhorant to the natives!

Taking the citadel's obvious age to mind, and considering the numerous legends that the tribesemen constantly whisper about it, I turned to my extensive library for clues to what civilisation could possibly have built such a monstrous city. However, not even my collection could tell me what information I needed to know. Oh yes, I found that Zimbabwe was old before the Pharoahs, but that was not enough. I was forced to consult the locked and sealed section of "rare books" at the Miskatonic Univeristy Library in Arkham. Rather that I had not! For what I learned there was knowledge that will haunt me to my dying day. It was in the blasphemous ((Editor's deletion)) that I found the learning I sought. The book mentions several such cities as Great Zimbabwe, (although where the other archaic ruins lie, I do not and *will* not seek to learn!). Even in those ancient days, the stone metropolises were desolate ruins, but the many shattered carvings that dot Zimbabwe today, were still whole, revealing their hideous and obscene subject matter. Archaeolog-

(Continued on page 11)

The Red Brain's Trust

In *DAGON #11*, I wrote on the subject of insects, spiders, and the like, which may follow Mankind as the dominant life form. I appealed for more information from a *DAGON*-reading biologist. A letter from Sandy Petersen on the subject appeared in *DAGON #12* Black Mail. I have received a substantial amount of material on various aspects of this from Robert Longmuir, the Scottish mycologist. Much of this material covers the same ground as Mr. Petersen's letter. However, the following seems to me to be of interest:-

"One main factor governing insect size is the respiratory system. Humans are human-size, or, rather, *can* be human-sized, due, amongst other things, to the way in which oxygen is absorbed into the bloodstream via the lungs. Insects are so small as to be unable to utilise any such thing as an oxygen-carrying blood system. Pulp a caterpillar to bits (I'm sure most people have at some time or another!), and what you'll find amongst the wreckage is green fluid. Most of this is blood, but isn't carrying oxygen, and hence isn't red. Insects have holes in their exoskeleton called spiracles, which allow gases to enter almost directly into the internal tissue systems of their bodies. Due to the size of an insect, oxygen can be absorbed at molecular level... Giant insects - theoretically possible - no. Unless they evolved lungs akin to humans. (Amongst many other alterations, of course). But that's where the fun lies when the hero is confronted by a twenty foot preying mantis - "It's not possible, I tell you professor - tell me it's not poss-" .... Physical law states the bee cannot fly, yet it does; from my own field of mycology, (study of fungi) I could state in straightforward biological terms why its impossible for fungi from Yuggoth to exist, yet the idea of a fungoid race capable of interstellar travel, and brain surgery, is a most fantastic one. Physics will probably tell you why it's impossible to fly through space as the Mi-go do. Chemistry and biology will tell you why the Mi-go couldn't possibly be composed of fungi, and fungi alone. Lovecraft will tell you about the Whisperer in Darkness."

* * * *

I entered into the subject of published Necronomica in *DAGON #11 and #12*. Robert Kemp of Bracknell mentions having recently purchased the Avon paperback of the Simon Necronomicon for £3.95 (including postage) from MRG, Archers Court, Stonestile Lane, Hastings TN35 4PG. He thinks that this is the best source for obtaining the volume - Magical Childe offer it at the same price, but may charge as much as £4 for postage (their advert is unclear on this point). Stacy Clark of Walnut Creek, California informs me that a printing of the Necronomicon is available from Book World, 1143 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06511, USA for $4.95 plus $2 postage for overseas shipping.

A second letter from Stacy Clark asks after Clithanus, the author of a book on demonology. So far, I have drawn a total blank on this one.

((I may be able to help a little here Peter. Clithanus is a creation of August Derleth's who first appeared, I believe, in the tale "Something from Out There" (Weird Tales Jan. 1951). The first mention of Clithanus tells us that the "somewhat deranged" monk wrote a tome entitled simply *Confessions*, (a title which Mythos readers have since commonly referred to as "Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus"). Apparently Clithanus mentioned many startling references to the Great Old Ones in his tome (penned incidentally back in the Medieval Ages in a rather barberous Latin tongue). Clithanus preferred to refer to the Great Old Ones as "the Evil Ones". History states that the mad monk spent most of his time searching for magical sects, practices, and lore connected with the "Evil Ones". His tome tells how Clithanus discovered "the five-pointed stone, emblem of the power of the Elder Gods, and feared by the Ancient Ones and their minions." on the sea-coast of Hyde-stall, where the monk lived and an opening on the coast close nearby. Further research by Clithanus revealed "furtive treks down into the passages" beneath the oceans leading to a city of undreamed of horror. Soon Clithanus realised that the five pointed stone was in fact a form of protection from these horrors and that once it was removed, the horrors could return from beneath the waves and wreck havok on the earth once more. Frightened the mad monk took his story to Bishop Augustine, the man who originally placed the stone in position. However, Augustine fearing wide-spread panic, had Clithanus banished to Rome and it was here that the mad monk penned his incredible *Confessions*. Augustine later

wrote to the Pope claiming that "Something from out there returned to these shores, and I have attended to it."

Further information on the subject of the Mad Monk appears in another Derleth tale entitled "The Passing of Eric Holm" which was written under the pseudonym of Will Garth for Strange Stories magazine and reprinted in the Dwellers in Darkness (A.H. 1976). This tale concerned the startling revelations uncovered following the death of Eric Holm shortly after purchasing a copy of *Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus* from a cheap book importer. This tale doesn't really add to the lore given us in "Somthing from Out There". However the tale informs us that Clithanus wrote in his tome of the formula required to summon the "spawn of Cthulhu from the sunken kingdom of R'lyeh!".

"The Horror from the Depths" (formerly entitled "The Evil Ones" in Strange Stories, Oct. 1940) and reprinted in Colonel Markesan and Less Pleasant People (A.H. 1966) was a collaboration between Derleth and Mark Schorer which once again alluded to the Mad Monk's discovery of the Elder Sign and which quoted briefly from that same tome again. Of note, too, is a piece entitled "Confessions of the Mad Monk Clithanus" by Lin Carter which appeared in Crypt of Cthulhu 23, St. John's Eve 1984. Carter informs us that a copy of the *Confessions* can be found at the library of the Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan and that the incantation recited in Derleth and Schorer's tale only carried a brief part of "The Incantation of the Elder Sign". Carter restores and corrects the formula here for any unfortunate readers who may need it. - ed.))

* * * * *

In *DAGON #12* I turned to the subject of contradictions between different Mythos stories. Robert Kemp has written to me with his solution - "*don't* try to reconcile them. The Mythos is an insane "alternative reality", of which each story affords only the minutest glimpse. This reality obeys none of the laws of acceptable reality and one of the rules that is conspicuously broken is that of logic - so it's no wonder that some of the stories are contradictory. If someone were to read all of the stories and then reconcile them so that they all made sense, that person would have 100% Mythos Knowledge - that means total insanity! So accept the contradictions as an integral part of the Mythos, rationalising them could be damaging to your mental health."

* * * * *

Following publication of my answer concerning Robert W. Chambers' "The King in Yellow" and the origin of Hastur, Dave Hallett of Oxford University asks specifically about Hali and Carcosa. Both names first appeared in Ambrose Bierce's story "An Inhabitant of Carcosa" - Carcosa is an ancient city, while Hali is the name of a philiosopher. Bierce didn't refer to Carcosa again, but a quotation from Hali appears at the beginning of his later story "The Death of Halpin Frayner". Robert W. Chambers used Bierce's names freely so that Hali became the name of a lake; he also took up Bierce's passing reference to the (real) constellation of The Hyades and expanded upon it considerably. Lovecraft used a number of Chambers references, particularly in "The Whisperer in Darkness" but it is notable that the bulk of references Lovecraft absorbed were those that Chambers had taken from Bierce. (The yellow sign is a notable exception.) Lovecraft was well aware of the origin of Hali, Hastur and Carcosa in Bierce's works - he referred to the matter in a letter to Clark Ashton Smith (June 24, 1927, Selected Letters II p.148). A later reference (to Emil Petaja, March 6, 1935, Selected Letters V p.120) is more interesting: "Chambers borrowed Bierce's artificial mythology just as Clark Ashton Smith & I allude to each other's artificial mythologies in our respective tales." There seems to be an implication that this process of borrowing from one author to another, so like the creation of the Mythos through the mutual borrowing of names and plot elements by Lovecraft and his friends, led Lovecraft to take up the names borrowed by Chambers from Bierce in preference to others invented by Chambers or used exclusively by Bierce.

While writing on the subject of Hastur in *DAGON #13* I mentioned that HPL's sonnet "The Elder Pharos" may be seen as a reference to Hastur as The King in Yellow. I have since read an essay by Will Murray, "Illuminating 'The Elder Pharos'" (Crypt of Cthulhu 20) While Mr. Murray does not make the connection between the thing in the silken mask and Hastur, he does point out that this thing is obviously the same as the high priest mentioned in "Celephais" and whom Randolph Carter meets in "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath. These stories do nothing to dispel the idea that the thing in the silken mask is Hastur.

An excellent book for anyone interested in Hastur is The Spawn of Cthulhu edited by Lin Carter (Ballantine Books, 1971) which includes several of the relevant stories, among them a few of Mr. Carter's own "Dreams From R'lyeh" under the title "Litany To Hastur".

* * * * *

I have received a long question from Des Lewis of Coulsdon about H. P. Lovecraft and music - music inspired by HPL's work and Lovecraft's attitude to music.

There was a rock group called H. P. Lovecraft formed in the late 60's. Someone once played me one (or more?) of their records but I found their music profoundly unmemorable. A review of one of their records in The Arkham Collector No. 5 (Summer 1969) mentions that one of their numbers is called "At the Mountains of Madness" so, obviously, their songs, as well as the group name, related to Lovecraft. A further reference to the group in The Arkham Collector No. 9 (Spring 1971) mentions that the group had dropped the "H.P." and were simply calling themselves "Lovecraft". In the same place their sound is likened to that of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. No doubt there are other references to Lovecraft in pop music. Dave Hallett mentions a Blue Oyster Cult song "ETI which mentions "the King in Yellow and the Queen in Red" which may be some kind of Mythos reference.

Harold S. Farnese, dean of the Institute of Musical Education in Los Angeles, set two of Lovecraft's "Fungi from Yuggoth" to music in 1932 ("Mirage" & "The Elder Pharos"). Farnese would have liked Lovecraft to collaborate with him on the libretto for an opera but, while Lovecraft did not precisely refuse to cooperate, the idea came to nothing. By his own account, HPL tried to write a cosmic opera at about the age of ten (Selected Letters I p.76) but nothing of this project seems to have survived.

Lovecraft's actual music taste (see Selected Letters I pp.75-76; III pp.221 & 342; VI pp. 372-3) appears to have resembled that of many people. He liked the popular music of his teenage years and his early twenties, but disliked later popular and serious music. He knew enough of popular music in his youth to inscribe the lyrics of a 1903 popular song in a letter to J. Vernon Shea in 1934 (Selected Letters IV p.365). The importance of music to Lovecraftmay be gauged by the fact that when, in 1923, he recovered from a period of deafness he wrote "Ho hum! But it is a frightful bore to hear again - the world sounds so beastly commonplace!" (Selected Letters I p.232). In Lovecraft's fiction, one may note, music is often cacophonous and generally used by the enemies rather then friends of Mankind.

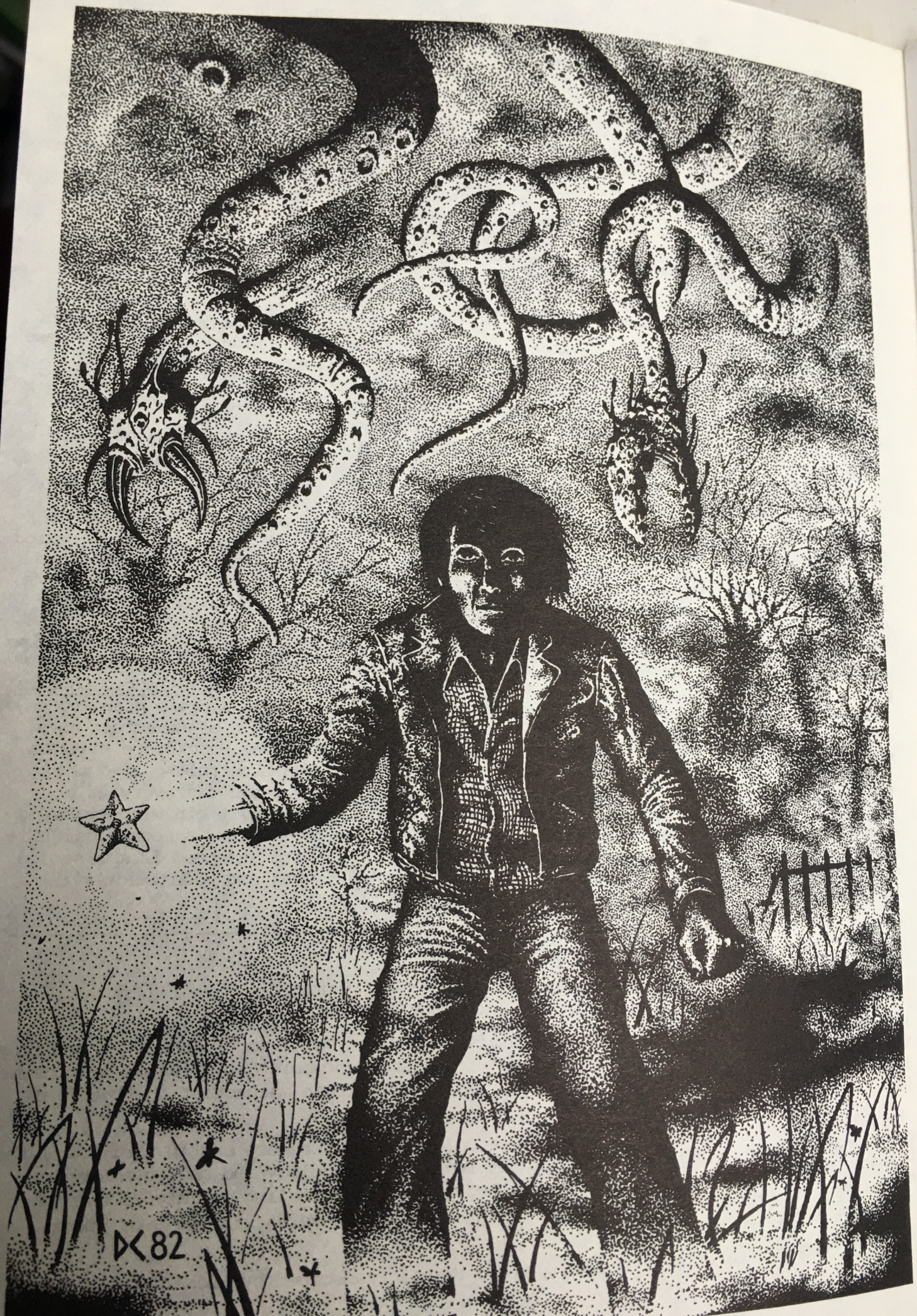
Lovecraft had violin lessons as a child which he hated (Selected Letters I p.75) and also seems to have had a strange familiarity with keyboards as he attempted to play "Yes, We Have No Bananas" on the organ of the First Babtist Church in Providence (Selected Letters I p.277). He appears, though, not to have had much regret in selling Sonia's piano to pay bills in 1924 (Selected Letters I p.349). But the most curious aspect of Lovecraft as a musician is that at the age of eleven he formed something called The Blackstone Military Band. The band comprised, chiefly, a crude wind instrument which Lovecraft called the "Zobo". HPL's role was more impressive - he was the drummer: "... the discovery of a small papier-mache Zobo at the toy store, which I could grip with my teeth without using my hands. Thus my hands were free for drumming - whilst one foot worked a mechanical triangle-beater and the other worked the cymbals - or rather, a wire (adapted from a second triangle-beater) which cranked down on a single horizontal cymbal and made exactly the right cacophony...." (Selected Letters III p.246).

GREAT ZIMBABWE
Great Archaeological Sites - The Truths
Continued from page 8

ists today seek to reconstruct those same statues, and they will not listen to my warnings! They must not succeed, for to see those monsterous carvings would drive lesser men insane! I know, for I have see them, drawn in that ghastly Hyperborean manuscript in that foul tome.

The Valusians built this hellish ruin, those cold-blooded serpent men. In their day, they controlled an empire with the combined powers fo great technology and malignant magic. Long gone from this world, they were vanquished only by the cooling climate of our young planet. Were it not for these changes, we might even now be serfs slaving away under a reptillian yoke.....

(From the notes of Prof. Simon Davreau (Oxford Univ), transcibed by Richard Watts, June 86).


DK82

The Plain of Sound

by

Ramsey Campbell

for Chris — all the best! Ramsey

Verily do we know little of the other universes beyond the gate which YOG SOTHOTH guards. Of those which come through the gate and make their habitation in this world none can tell; although the Ibn Schacabao tells of the beings which crawl from the Gulf of S'glhuo that they may be known by their sound. In that Gulf the very worlds are of sound, and matter is known but as an odor; and the notes of our pipes in this world may create beauty or bring forth abominations in S'glhuo. For the barrier between haply grows thin, and when sourceless sounds occur we may justly look to the denizens of S'glhuo. They can do little harm to those of Earth, and fear only that shape which a certain sound may form in their universe.

Abdul Alhazred: *Necronomicon*

When Frank Nuttall, Tony Roles and I reached the Inn at Severnford, we found that it was closed.

It was the summer of 1958, and as we had nothing particular to do at Brichester University that day we had decided to go out walking. I had suggested a trip to Goatswood — the legends there interested me — but Tony had heard things which made him dislike that town. Then Frank had told us about an advertisement in the *Brichester Weekly News* about a year back which had referred to an inn at the centre of Severnford as "one of the oldest in England." We could walk there in the morning and quench the thirst caused by the journey; afterward could take the bus back to Brichester if we did not feel like walking.

Tony was not enthusiastic. "Why go all that way to get drunk," he inquired, "even if it is so old? Besides, that ad in the paper's old too — by now the place has probably fallen down..." However, Frank and I wanted to try it, and finally we overuled his protests.

We would have done better to agree with him, for we found the inn's doors and windows boarded up and a nearby sign saying: "Temporarily closed to the public." The only course was to visit the modern public house up the street. We looked round the town a little; this did not occupy us long, for Severnford has few places of interest, most of it being dockland. Before two o'clock we were searching for a bus-stop; when it eluded us, we entered a newsagent's for directions.

"Bus t' Brichester? No, only in the mornin's," the proprietor told us. "Up from the University, are you?"

"Then how do we get back?" Tony asked.

"Walk, I s'pose," suggested the newsagent. "Why'd you come up anyway — oh, t' look at the Inn? No, you won't get in there now — so many o' them bloody teenagers 've been breakin' the winders an' such that Council says it'll only open t' people with special permission. Good job too — though I'm not sayin' as it's kids like you as does it. Still, you'll be wantin' t' get back t' Brichester, an' I know the shortest way."

he began to give us complicated directions, which he repeated in detail. When we still looked uncertain he waited while Frank got out his notebook and pencil and took down the route. At the end of this I was not yet sure which way to go, but, as I remarked: "If we get lost, we can always ask."

"Oh, no," protested our informant. "You won't go wrong if you follow that."

"Right, thanks," Frank said. "And I suppose there will be passers-by to ask if we *do* go wrong?"

"I wouldn't." The newsagent turned to rearrange papers in the rack. "You might ask the wrong people."

Hearing no more from him, we went out into the street and turned right towards Brichester. Once one leaves behind the central area of Severnford where a group of archaic buildings is preserved, and comes to the surrounding red-brick houses, there is little to interest the sightseer. Much of Severnford is dockland, and even the country beyond is not noticeably pleasant to the forced hiker. Besides, some of the roads are noticeably rough, though that may have been because we took the wrong turning — for, an hour out of Severnford, we realized we were lost.

"Then left at the signpost about a mile out, it says here," said Frank. But we've come

more than a mile already — where's the signpost?"

"So what do we do — go back and ask?" Tony suggested.

"Too far for that. Look," Frank asked me, "have you got that compass you're always carrying, Les? Brichester is almost south-east of Severnford — if we keep on in that direction, we won't go far wrong."

The road we had been following ran east-west. Now, when we turned off into open country, we could rely only on my compass, and we soon found that we needed it. Once, when ascending a slope, we had to detour round a thickly overgrown forest, where we could have certainly have become further lost. After that we crossed monotonous fields, never seeing a building or another human being. Two and a half hours out of Severnford, we reached an area of grassy hillocks, and from there descended into and clambered out of miniature valleys. About a hlaf-a-mile into this region, Tony signalled us to keep quiet.

"All I can hear is the stream," said Frank. "Am I supposed to hear something important? You hear anything, Les?"

The rushing stream we had just crossed effectively drowned most distant sounds, but I thought I heard a nearby mechanical whirring. It rose and fell like the sound of a moving vehicle, but with the loudly splashing water I could distinguish no details.

"I'm not sure," I answered. "There's something that could be a tractor, I think —"

"That's what I thought," agreed Tony. "It's ahead somewhere — maybe the driver can direct us. If, of course, he's not one of that newsagent's wrong people!"

The mechanical throbbing loudened as we crossed two hills and came onto a strip of level ground fronting a long, low ridge. I was the first to reach the ridge, climb it and stand atop it. As my head rose above the ridge, I thre myself back.

On the other side lay a roughly square plain, surrounded by four ridges. The plain was about four hundred yards square, and at the opposite end was a one-story building. Apart from this the plain was totally bare, and that was what startled me most. For from that bare stretch of land rose a deafening flood of sound. Here was the source of that mechanical whirring; it throbbed overpoweringly upward, incessantly fluctuating through three notes. behind it were other sounds; a faint bass humming which hovered on the edge of audibility, and others — whistlings and high-pitched twangs — which sometimes were inaudible and sometimes as loud as the whirring.

By now Tony and Frank were beside me, staring down.

"Surely, it can't be coming from that hut?" Frank said. "It's no tractor, that's certain, and a hut that size could never contain anything that'd make that row."

"I thought that it was coming from underground somewhere," suggested Tony. "Mining operations, maybe."

"Whatever it is, there's that hut," I said. We can ask the way there."

Tony looked down doubtfully. "I don't know — it might be dangerous. You know driving over subsidence can be dangerous, and how do we know they're not working on something like that here?"

"There'd be signs if they were," I reassured hum. "No, come on — there may be nowhere else we can ask, and there's no use keeping on in the wrong direction."

We descended the ridge and walked perhaps twenty yards across the plain.

It was like walking into a tidal wave. the sound was suddenly all around us; the more overpowering because though it beat on us from all sides, we could not fight back — like being engulfed in jelly. I could not have stood it for long — I put my hands over my ears and yelled "Run!" And I staggered across the plain, the sound which I could not shut out booming at me, until I reached the building on the other side.

It was a brown stone house, not a hut as we had thought. It had an arched doorway in the wall facing us, bordered by two low windows without curtains. From what we could see the room on the left was a living-room, that on the right a bedroom, but grime on the windows prevented us from seeing more, except that the rooms were unoccupied. We did not think to look in at any windows at the back. The door had no bell or knocker, but Frank pounded on a panel.

There was no answer, and he knocked harder. On the second knock the door swang inward, revealing that it opened into the living room. Frank looked in and called: "Anybody at home?" Still nobody answered, and he turned back to us.

"Do you think we'd better go in?" he asked. "Maybe we could wait for the owner, or there might be something in the house that'd direct us."

Tony pushed past me to look. "Hey, what — Frank, do you notice anything here? Something

tells me that whoever the owner is, he isn't house-proud."

We could see what he meant. There were wooden chairs, a table, bookcases, a ragged carpet — and all thick with dust. We hesitated a minute, waiting for someone to make a decision; then Frank entered. He stopped inside the door and pointed. Looking over his shoulder, we could see there were no footprints anywhere in the dust.

We looked around for some explanation. While Frank closed the door and cut off the throbbing from outside, Tony — our bibliophile — crossed to the bookcases and looked at the spines. I noticed a newspaper on the table and idly picked it up.

"The owner must be a bit peculiar... *La Strega*, by Pico della Mirandola," Tony read, "—*Discovery of Witches* — *The Red Dragon* — hey, *Revelations of Glaaki*; isn't that the book the University can't get for their restricted section? Here's a diary, big one, too, but I hadn't better tough that."

When I turned to the front page of the newspaper, I saw it was the *Camside Observer*. As I looked closer, I saw something which made me call the others. "Look at this — December 8, 1930! You're right about this man being peculiar — what sort of person keeps a newspaper for twenty-eight years?"

"I'm going to look in the bedroom," Frank declared. He looked on the door of the living-room, and, when we came up beside him, opened it. The room was almost bare: a wardrobe, a hanging wall-mirror, and a bed, were the only furnishings. The bed, as we had expected, was empty; but the mark of a sleeping body was clearly defined, though filled with dust. We moved closer, noting the absence of footprints on the floor; and bending over the bed, I thought I saw something besides dust in the hollows left by the sleeper — something like ground glass, sparkling greenly.

"What's happened?" Tony asked in a rather frightened tone.

"Oh, probably nothing out of the ordinary," said Frank. "Maybe there's another entrance round the back — maybe he can't stand all that noise, whatever it is, and has a bedroom on the other side. Look there's a door in that wall; that may be it."

I went across and opened it, but only a very primitive lavatory lay beyond.

"Wait a minute, I think there was a door next to the bookcase," recollected Tony. He returned to the living-room and opened the door he had noticed. As we followed him, he exclaimed: "My God — *now* what?"

This fourth room was longer than any of the others, but it was the contents which had drawn Tony's exclamation. Nearest us on the bare floor was something like a television screen, about two feet across, with a blue-glass light bulb behind it, strangely distorted and with thick wires attached. Next to it another pair of wires led from a megaphone-shaped receiver. In between the opposite wall and these instruments lay a large arrangement of crystals, induction coils and tubes, from which wires hang from each end for possible attachment to the other appliances. The far corner of the ceiling had recently collapsed, allowing rain to drip onto a sounding-board carrying a dozen strings, a large lever and a motor connected by cogs to a plectrum-covered cylinder. Out of curiosity I crossed and plucked a string; but such a discord trembled through the board that I quickly muffled it.

"Something *very* funny is going on here," Frank said. "There's no other room, so where can he sleep? And the dust, and the newspaper — and now these things — I've never seen anything like them..."

"Why don't we look at his diary?" suggested Tony. "It doesn't look like he'll be back, and I for one want to know what's happened here."

So we went back into the living-room and Tony took down the heavy volume. He opened it to its last entry: December 8, 1930. "If we all try and read it, it'll take three times as long," he said. "You two sit down and I'll try and read the relevant bits." He was silent for a few minutes then:

"Professor Arnold Hird, ex-Brichester University: never heard of him — must've been before our time... Ah, here we are —

" 'January 3, 1930: Today moved into new house (if it can be called a house!) Noises are queer — suppose it's only because there's so much superstition about them that nobody's investigated before. Intend to make full study — meteorological conditions, etc; feel that wind blowing over ridges may vibrate & cause sounds. Tomorrow to look round, take measurements, find out if anything will interrupt sounds. Peculiar that sound seems to be deafening in certain radius, relatively faint beyond — no gradual fading.'

" 'January 4: Sleep uneasy last night — unaccustomed dreams. City on great mountain —

angled streets, spiraling pillars and cones. Strange inhabitants; taller than human, scaly skin, boneless fingers, yet somehow not repulsive. Were aware of me, in fact seemed to await my arrival, but each time one approached me I awoke. repeated several times.

" 'Progress negative. Screens on top of ridges did not interrupt sound; undiminished though little wind. Measurements — north-west ridge 423 yards...' Well, there's a lot more like that."

"Make sure you don't miss anything important," Frank said as Tony turned pages.

" 'January 6: Dreams again. Same city, figures as though waiting. Leader approached. Seemed to be communicating with me telepathically: I caught the thought — *Do not be afraid; we are the sounds.* Whole scene then faded.

" 'No progress whatever. Unable to concentrate on findings; dreams distracting.'

" 'January 7: Insane perhaps, but am off to British Museum tomorrow. In last night's dream was told: *Check* Necronomicon — *formula for aiding us to reach you.* Page reference given. Expect & hope this will be a false alarm — dreams taking altogether too much out of me. But what if something on that page? Am not interested in that field — impossible to know in normal way...'

" 'January 9: Back from London. Mao rite — on page I looked up — exactly as described in dream! Don't know what it will do, but will perform it tonight to find out. Strange no dreams while away — some influence existing only here?'

" 'January 10: Didn't awake till late afternoon. Dreams began as soon as sleep after rite. Don't know what to think. Alternatives both disturbing: either brain receiving transmissions, or subconsciously inventing everything — but wd. sane mind act thus?

" 'If true that transmissions external, learned following:

" 'Sounds in this area *are equivalents of matter in another dimension.* Said dimension overlaps ours at this point and certain others. City and inhabitants in dream do not appear as in own sphere, but as wd. appear if consisting of matter. Different sounds here correspond to various objects in other dimension: whirring equals pillars & cones, bass throbbing is ground, other varying sounds are people of city & other moving objects. Matter on our side they sense as odours.

" 'The inhabitants can transmit whole concepts mentally. Leader asked me to try not to make sounds in radius of point of connection. Carried over to their dimension. My footsteps — huge crystals appeared on streets of city. My breathing — something living which they refused to show me. Had to be killed at once.

" 'Inhabitants interested in communication with our dimension. Not dream-transmission — frequent use of Mao rite dangerous. *Translator* to be built on this side — enables sound to be translated into visual terms on screen, as in dream, but little else. When they build counterpart link will be effected — complete passage between dimensions. Unfortunately, their translator completely different from ours & not yet successful. Leader told me: *Look in* The Revelations of Glaaki *for the plans.* Also gave me page reference & said where to get copy.

" 'Must get copy. If no plan, all coincidence & can return to normal research. If plan, can build machine, claim discovery of other dimension!' "

"I've been thinking," I interrupted. "Arnold Hird — there was something — wasn't he asked to leave the University because he attacked someone when they disagreed with him? Said he'd return and astonish everybody some day, but was never heard of again."

"I don't know," said Tony. "Anyway, he continues:

" 'January 12: Got *Revelations of Glaaki.* Had to take drastic measures to obtain it, too. Plan here — book 9, pp. 2057-9. Will take some time to build, but worth it. To think that besides me, only superstitious know of this — but will soon be able to prove it!'

"Hmm — well, there don't seem to be any very interesting entries after that. Just 'not much progress today' or 'screen arrangement completed' or here 'down to Severnford today — had to order strings at music shop. Don't like the idea of using it, but must keep it handy in case'."

"So that's it." Frank said, standing up. "The man was a lunatic, and we've been sitting here listening to his ravings. No wonder he was kicked out of the University."

"I don't think so," I disagreed. "It seems far too complex —"

"Wait a minute, here's another entry," called Tony, "— 'December 7.' "

Frank gave him a protesting look, but sat down again.

" 'December 7: Got through. Image faint, but contact sufficient — beings aware. Showed me unfinished translator on their side — may take some time before completion. Few more

days to perfect image, then will pubicize.'
" 'December 8: Must be sure about weapon I have constructed. *Revelations* gave reason for use, but way of death is horrible. If unnecessary, definately will destroy. Tonight will find out — will call Alala.' "
"Well, Frank?" I asked as Tony replaced the diary and began to search the shelves. "Crazy, maybe — but there are those sounds — and he called *something* that night where his diary ends — and there's that perculiar stuff all over the bed —"
"But how will we know either way?" Tony asked, removing a book.
"Set up all that paraphernalia, obviously, and see what comes through on that screen."
"I don't know," Tony said. "I want to look in the *Revelations of Glaaki* — that's what I've got here — but as for trying it ourselves. I think that's going a bit far. You'll notice how careful he was about it, and something happened to him."
"Come on, let's look at the book," interrupted Frank. "That can't do any harm."
Tony finally opened it and placed it on the table. On the page we examined diagrams, and learned that, "the screen is attached to the central position and viewed, while the receiver is directed towards the sounds before attachment." No power was necessary, for "the very sounds in their passing manipulate the instrument." The diagrams were crude but intelligible, and both Frank and I were ready to experiment. but Tony pointed to a passage at the end of the section:
"The intentions of the inhabitants of S'glhuo are uncertain. Those who use the translator would be wise to keep them the string sounding-board, the only earthly weapon to touch S'glhuo. For when they build the translator to complete the connexion, who knows what they might bring through with them? They are adept in concealing their intentions in dream-communication, and the sounding-board should be used at the first hostile action."
"You see?" Tony said triumphantly. "These things are unfriendly — the book says so!"
"Oh, no, it doesn't," contradicted Frank, "and anyway it's a load of balls — living sounds, hah! But just suppose it *was* true — if we got through, we could claim the discovery — after all, the book says you're safe with this 'weapon'. And there's no rush back to the University."
Arguements ensued, but finally we opened the doors and dragged the instruments outside. I returned for the sounding-board, noticing how rusted it was, and Tony brought the volume of the *Revelations*. We stood at the edge of the area of sound and placed the receiver about midway. The screen was connected to the central section, and at last we clipped the wires from the screen to the rest.
For a minute nothing happened. The screen stayed blank; the coils and wires did not respond. Tony looked at the sounding-board. The vibrations had taken on a somehow expectant quality, as if aware of our experiment. And then the blue light bulb flickered, and an image slowly formed on the screen.
It was a landscape of dream. In the background, great glaciers and crystal mountains sparkled, while at their peaks enormous stone buildings stretched up into the mist. There were translucent shapes flitting about those buildings. But the foreground was most noticeable — the slanting streets and twisted pillar-supported cones which formed a city on one of the icy mountains. We could see no life in the city brooding in a sourceless blue light; only a great machine of tubes and crystals which stood before us on the street.
When a figure rose into the screen, we recoiled. I felt a chill of terror, for this was one of the city's inhabitants — and it was not human. It was too thin and tall, with huge pupilless eyes, and a skin covered with tiny rippling blue scales. The fingers were boneless, and I felt a surge of revulsion as the white eyes stared unaware into my direction. But I somehow felt that this was an intelligent being, and not definately hostile.
The being took out of its metallic robe a thin rod, which it held vertically and stroked several times. Whatever the principle, this must have been a summons, for in a few minutes a crowd had formed about the instrument in the street. What followed may only have been their method of communication, but I found it horrible; they stood in a circle, and their fingers stretched fully two feet to interlace in the centre. They dispersed after a short time and spread out, a small group remaining by the machine.
"Look at the thing in the street," said Tony. "Do you suppose —"
"Not now," Frank, who was watching in fascination, interrupted. "I don't know whether it would be better to switch off now and get someone down from the University — no, hell, let's watch a bit longer. To think that we're watching another world!"
The group around the machine was turning it, and at that moment a set of three tubes came

into view, pointing straight at us. One of the beings went to a switchboard and clutched a lever with long twining fingers. Tony began to speak, but simultaneously I realized what he was thinking.

"Frank," I shouted, "that's their translator! They're going to make the connexion!"

"Do you think I'd better switch off, then?"

"But suppose that's not enough?" yelled Tony. "Do you want them to come through without knowing what they'll do? You read the book — for God's sake use the weapon before it's too late!"

His hysteria affected us all. Frank ran to the sounding-board and grabbed the lever. I watched the being on the screen adjusting his machine, and saw that it was nearly ready to complete the connexion.

"Why aren't you doing anything?" Tony screamed at Frank.

He called back: "The lever won't move! Must be rust in the works — quick, Les, see if you can get them unstuck!"

I ran over and began to scrape at the gears with a knife. Accidentally the blade slipped and twanged across the strings.

"There's something forming, I can't quite see," Tony said —

Frank was straining so hard at the lever that I was afraid it would snap — then it jerked free, the gears moved, the plectrum cylinder spun and an atrocious sound came from the strings. It was a scraping, whining discord which clawed at our ears; it blotted out those other sounds, and I could not have stood it for long.

Then Tony screamed. We whirled to see him kick in the screen and stamp ferociously on the wires, still shrieking. Frank shouted at him — and as he turned we saw the slackness of his mouth and the saliva drooling down his chin.

We finally locked him in the back room of the house while we found our way back to Brichester. We told the doctors only that he had become separated from us, and that by the time we found him everything was as they saw it. When they removed Tony from the house Frank took the opportunity to tear a few pages out of *The revelations of Glaaki*. Perhaps because of this, the team of Brichester professors and others studying conditions there are making little progress. Frank and I will never go there again; the events of that afternoon have left too deep a mark.

Of course, they affected Tony far more. He is completely insane, and the doctors foresee no recovery. At his worst he is totally incoherent, and attacks anyone who cannot satisfactorily explain every sound he hears. he gives no indication in his coherent periods of what drove him mad. He imagines he saw something more on that screen, but never describes what he saw.

Occasionally he refers to the object he thinks he saw. Over the years he has mentioned details which would suggest something incredibly alien, but of course it must have been something else which unbalanced him. he speaks of "the snailhorns," "the blue crystalline lenses," "the mobility of the faces," "the living flame and water," "the bell-shaped appendages," and "the common head of many bodies."

But these periods of comparative coherency do not last long. Usually they end when a look of horror spreads over his face, he stiffens and screams something which he has not yet explained:

"I saw what it took from its victims! *I saw what it took from its victims!*"

(c) Ramsey Campbell 1964.

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THE ACOLYTE (Continued)

One of the interesting facets of VIDEODROME is that it is all filmed from the viewpoint of the main character — who hallucinates. So the hallucinations are shown as reality. The main character spends a lot of his time trying to tell the truth from illusion, and so does the audience. The ultimate message, of course, is that there *is* no truth — only perception. It inspired me to permit players to keep running insane investigators, but with hallucinations.

Yog-Sothoth Neblod Zin,

Sandy Petersen

THE SHADOW OVER SIDMOUTH

by R. A. Davey and S. J. Hatherley

A *Call of Cthulhu* adventure for a small group of investigators

It is spring. One of the players notices the following newspaper article:-

"SLAUGHTER CONTINUES
For the second week the slaughter of lambs in the Sidmouth area continues. Last weekend farmer Alfred Harris shot and killed a wild dog and it was hoped that this would be the end of the deaths. However, apart from a fall in the number of lambs found dead, the slaughter persists. The search is on for a further wild dog in the area. And reports suggest that there may even be a pack of dogs responsible for the recent spate of killings."

The Story so Far:- Mr and Mrs Green are an elderly, and slightly eccentric couple that run a garden shop in Sidmouth specialising in shrubs and plants. About six months ago they received from their nephew five, fist sized, blood red seeds from Darkest Africa. The couple planted the seeds and they quickly grew. It soon became apparent that these unusual and so far unrecognizable plants were not happy in the light, so the elderly couple moved them to the dark, damp fern section where the plants have continued to thrive ever since.

The plants, with their thick, hairy trunks and slender branches caused slight interest for their smell was most unpleasant. Only one was sold. Then, jsut two weeks ago, two were stolen - just before the horrific slayings of local livestock began.

Getting the Players Involved:- There are several ways of doing this; in desperation one of the farmers could hire the investigators; a reporter might sense a story, as might an author; the investigators may be visiting a relative in Sidmouth or their interests may be simply aroused by the above article.

Sidmouth:- A quiet, peaceful town on the coast of Devon. Sidmouth nestles between several hills and enjoys an unusually mild climate. This, combining with the beautiful surrounding countryside has made it a very popular place to retire to and over 70% of the inhabitants of the area are elderly. A considerable proportion of these old people are eccentric!

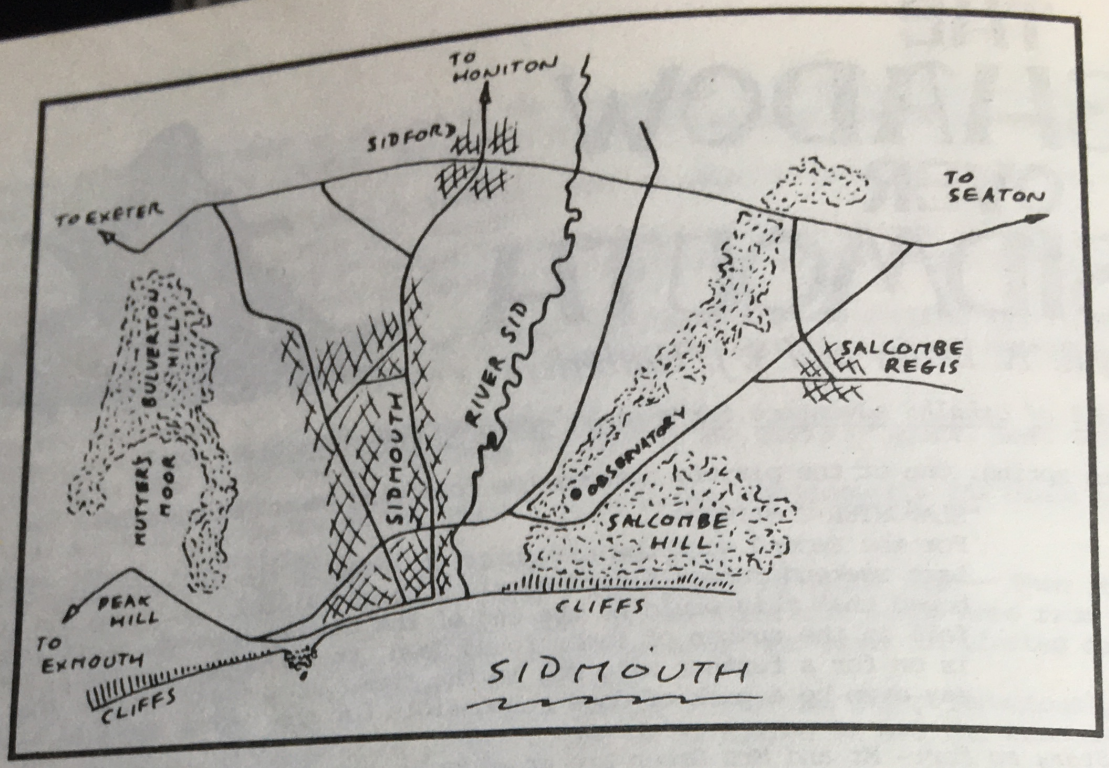
THE THING IN THE WOODS

The Lurking Horror:- This is the Dark Young that has made the headlines. There were two of them but shortly before the farmers shot the first wild dog, the other moved out. The Thing in the Woods lives upon Salcombe Hill and hides during the daytime, virtually undetectable. At night it stalks out from its lair and slays a lamb or two, that it finds, leaving behind only a charred, perforated skin. The farmers have taken to protecting their flocks but the Thing is sly and very patient.

Halting the Terror:- The police are undermanned and unable to cope, so it is left to the farmers to deal with the local menace. Traps have been set, but each time they are discovered torn apart. The farmers are not willing to stay and keep watch over the traps; the woods are unnatural enough by day, at night they seem positively terrfiying.

A successful ZOOLOGY or SPOT HIDDEN roll, whilst walking in the woods will reveal a total absence of large animal lifeforms (rabbits, badgers, foxes, etc.). The only noticeable tracks are the large cloven prints that the Thing has left, though the tracks never form a traceable path. No animals will enter the woods at all.

The farmers are scared and disorganised. With some leadership and initiative this Dark Young can be fairly easily killed.



THE GARDEN SHOP

The Grapevine:- Gossip in Sidmouth is one of the main industries. it is not hard for anyone to discover the local news and rumours - overhearing talk in shops, even some old dear talling the investigators herself (she's far too senile to notice that the investigators are "newcomers"). While the group are dealing with The Thing in the Woods they should hear that two of the Greens' plants were recently stolen - "the bad smelling ones". Failing this lead there will be a small article in the Sidmouth Herald, the local newspaper published on a Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Green:- A nice, slightly odd, elderly couple. They will gladly show the investigators around their shop and answer any questions concerning the stolen plants. A successful CTHULHU MYTHOS roll identifies these plants as *very* Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath! A successful IDEA or SPOT HIDDEN and the investigators notice that three of the five Dark Young are missing. The last one was bought - The Greens have records in the shop to trace who purchased the Thing.

Pruning:- The simplest was to dispose of the Dark Young is to actually buy the Things (at a £1 a time) and destroy them at the investigators leisure. If the investigators decide to break into the shop at night, mention the large cannister of weed-killer that stands atop one of the shelves close to the plants - not that it will have any effect on the Dark Young. Mrs. Green sleeps lightly (the Greens live above the shop) so be sure that the investigators make their SNEAK rolls. The Greens are on the telephone as are the police!

THE DISAPPEARING CATS

Catfood:- Mrs. Edna Wheeler owns a rambling mansion halfway up Salcombe Hill. About a week ago the second Dark Young wandered into her home from the woods (this is when the killings of local livestock dropped some 50%) Mrs. Wheeler has, literally, dozens of cats, so the Dark Young planted itself and began to feed. Only recently has she noticed the sudden decline in the number of her pets. She had thought that the putrid charred remains were leftovers of rodents that the cats had caught. Now the awful truth has dawned.
The police found nothing unusual (there was a rotting smell in one of the plant infested rooms in the house, but this odour was attributed to that of the cats). They offered advice, setting traps and the like, but the cats kept setting them off. Mrs. Wheeler is now alone in the mansion with her cats, but keeps an eye out for any wild dogs etc. The cats are noticeably discontent, but haven't left the house.

Saving the Day:- The news about Mrs. Wheeler and her disappearing cats is now local gossip. If the players fail to pick this clue up, perhaps the neswpaper article linking the cats and the livestock disappearance will alert them.
The players should be prepared for this one, now knowing what to expect. This Dark Young

should easily be slain, earning the ternal gratification of Mrs. Wheeler for all that's worth.

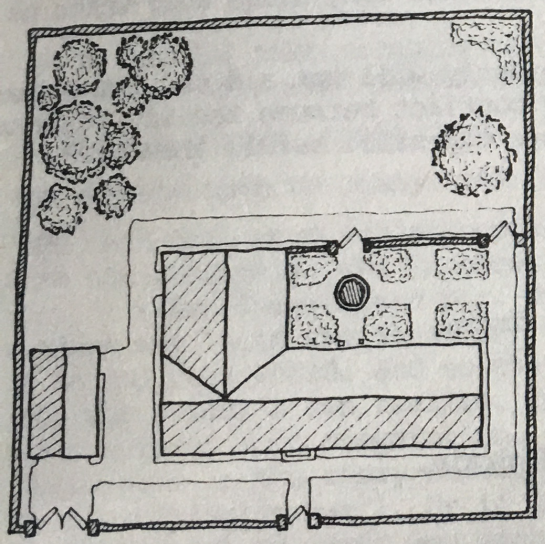
LAST OF THE MONSTERS

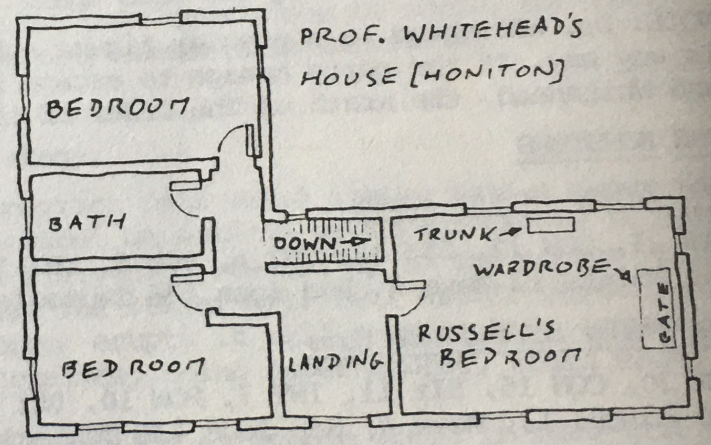
The Sale:- The third Dark Young was sold to Mr. Russell Whitehead, professor of mathematics at Exeter University. He lives alone in a large house on the outskirts of Horniton, a small town 8 miles from Sidmouth, and catches the train to Exeter each morning. Dr. WHitehead is a sorcerer who worships Yog-Sothoth, he spotted the Dark Young in Sidmouth and brought one. It now lives in his house where it is regularly fed with live meat.

Dr. Whitehead:- Is a friendly and popular man, well known and respected - a "pillar of the community", you might say. The fact that he practices magic and is a member of the widely spread cult entitled The Order of the Seven Stones is his secret. He keeps the Dark Young in his house basement, which is bricked and inaccessible except through the Gate hidden in the back of the wardrobe.

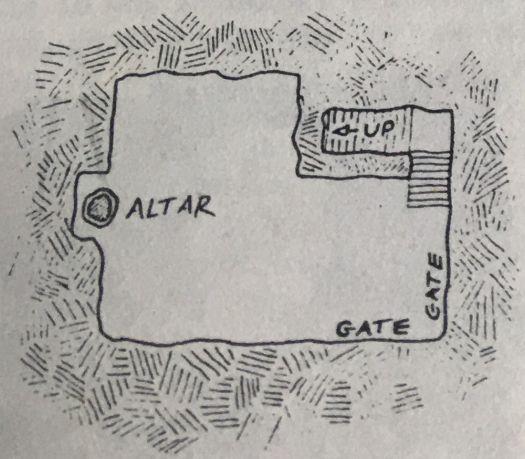
He has moved his sorcerous equipment out of the basement and into a locked trunk. The Dark Young is alone apart from a large granite font. Six men could just lift it - overcome its SIZ of 80 with combined STR. When the font is filled with an even mixture of blood and a flammable liquid and set alight, the spell for Call Yog-Sothoth may be read aloud and then if successful the image of the Great Old One will appear in the whirling smoke. The font may also be used to contact other members of the Order.

The blood neccessary for the summoning is delivered regularly to his doorstep, once a week by a member of the Order of the Seven Stones, during the early hours of the morning. Watching the house may reveal these deliveries.

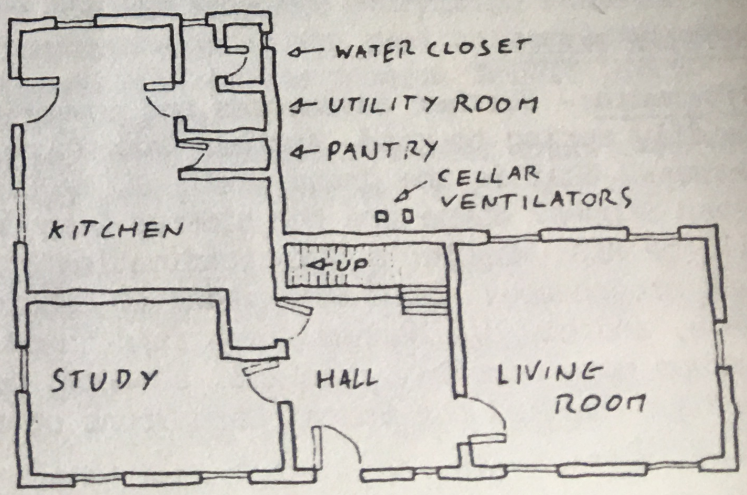




FIRST FLOOR



CELLAR



GROUND FLOOR

The Trunk:- Kept in Whitehead's bedroom, this old wooden trunk contains various items of magical significance. There are several sets of robes for wear during the summoning of Yog-Sothoth; the *Pnaktic Manuscripts* (containing Call of Yog-Sothoth, Brew Space Mead, Dread Curse of Azathoth); a diary including notes on how to operate the Gates and information pointing to a Deep Colony off of Sidmouth (actually this information is incorrect, the colony lies off of Exmouth!)

The last item is a crefully wrapped, rune inscribed sacrificial sword. If under threat, by investigators using violence or if the professor belives he may get away with the crime, Dr. Whitehead may use the sword to murder the investigators.

The Man Himself:- Dr. Whitehead, professor at Exeter University and Sorcerer. Age 48.

STR 13, CON 13, SIZ 9, INT 15, POW 20, DEX 14, APP 16, EDU 17, SAN 20 HIT POINTS 10.

Skills:- Bargain 40% Chemistry 30% Credit Rating 50% Cthulhu Mythos 45% Debate 70% Drive Auto 30% Electrical Repair 30% Fast Talk 80% Law 50% Library Use 55% Oratory 65% Psychology 30%.

Weapons:- Butcher Knife 50% 1d6 Dam. Sword (in trunk) 50% 1d8 Dam.

Spells:- Call Yog-Sothoth, Summon/Bind Byakhee, Brew Space Mead, Create Gate, Enchant Whistle, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Fist of Yog-Sothoth.

He has read the Universities copy of *The Sussex Manuscripts* containing Summon/Bind Byakhee and Enchant WHistle. (The book is held in the rare books section).

He sometimes casts Call Yog-Sothoth within a large stone tower many miles away which he sometimes travels to using the Gate spell.

NOTE: Dr. WHitehead is a popular figure - killing him overtly will not aid the investigator in any way. If the party manage to escape following any conflict between the investigators and Whitehead, the wrath of The Order of the Seven Stones may still befall them....

THE MONSTERS

The Thing in the Woods

STR 21, CON 12, SIZ 12, INT 6, POW 8, DEX 13,
Hit Points 12 Move 8. San loss 1d6 Tentacle 50% 1d6+STR drain.

The Thing Eating the Cats

STR 20, CON 15, SIz 11, INT 7, POW 10, DEX 14,
Hit Points 13, Move 8, San loss 1d6 Tentacle 40% 1d6+STR drain.

The Thing in the Basement

STR 28, CON 17, SIZ 20, INT 10, POW 13, DEX 14,
Hit Points 18, Move 8, San loss 1d3/1d8 Tentacle 65%+STR drain.

KEEPERS NOTES

Aftermath:- Further adventures and investigations readily spring to mind. Another Dark Young somehwere perhaps? What is the dread wrath of The Order of the Seven Stones? Where are the hideous Deep Ones? What will be Mrs. Wheeler's "gratitification"? Precisely what blasphemous rites are needed to create the seeds, and how did Nephew Green find them? And, perhaps more horribly than all, someone, somewhere may have created the Bonsai Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath....

P.S. The co-ords of the Tower (roughly) are
Longitude 3° 13' 40" W
Latitude 50° 52' 35" N
But don't go there alone at nigh[illegible]

Lessons from Lovecraft for Writers

by Robert M. Price

Why did lovecraft write his stories? Various sights (e.g., flaming sunset, the black abysses within shadowed gateways, deep woods, imposing architecture, bricked-up arches) would hint momentarily at unguessable wonders *beyond*. They created in him a sense of yearning curisosity and "adventurous expectancy." he said he had found most galling of all aspects of the human lot the limitations imposed on us by our short life-span, the short range of our senses, and our isolation in the universe.

He wrote to embody these feelings and to convey them to the reader, along with the momentary illusion that these chains had been snapped: a violation of natural law, an eruption into our mundane reality of that mystery that lurks beyond. This is why he wrote *horror* stories: because the natural reaction to such an event must be *fear*.

As to his technique, HPL would choose one mood or idea and try and figure how best to embody it in a chain of dramatic occurrences. Then he would:

1. Prepare a scenario or synopsis of the tale's events in order of hypothetical *occurrence*, including motivations, consequences.
2. A second synopsis in order of *narration* (e.g., taking into account flashbacks, later explanations by characters, etc.)
3. rapid writing out of draft, fluently, not too critically.
4. Do a thorough revision, focusing on vocabulary, prose rhythm, alliteration, word-choice (he thought you had to choose each word for precise effect just as carefully as you would in poetry).
   Be careful that transitions seem natural, not only from scene to scene, but from passages of normal detailed narration to sketchy summarizing narration.
5. Prepare a neat, typed copy.

You must be open to change and revise at any stage.

HPL said that mood and atmosphere are all-important in a weird story. Such a story deals with the unearthly, the unconceivable, so it cannot be handled matter-of-factly in some sort of taken-for-granted way. One must treat everything leading up to the horror in a mundane way, with the style of realism, so that the reader will feel him or herself to be in the real world, and so that when the horror erupts it will seem to have erupted into the reader's own reality. The events themselves, being supernatural, would sound silly without such preparation.

Characters in the story should be depicted as reacting as people would in real-life ("soul-shattering awe"). Or if they are accustomed to it somehow (e.g., Cthulhu cultists, the Whateleys) at least you might describe it for the reader with the awe most people would feel.

Atmosphere is all-important, overshadowin even the charactyers! Everything revolves around the disclosure of the horror. The weird pehenomenon is the real main character! This is why Lovecraft's stories have not translated well to the screen. Robert Bloch said, accurately, that no one *could* film "Call of Cthulhu."

This is also why HPL used seemingly anticlimatic "confirmational" rather than shocking *revelational* endings. It doesn't matter if the horror is a surprise. A *gradual* building up of the unearthly mood is just fine.

"Atmosphere, not action, is the great desideratum of weird fiction. Indeed, all that a wonder story can ever be is a vivid picture of a certain type of human mood. The moment it tries to become anything else it becomes cheap, puerile and unconvincing."

HPL applied the same guidelines to science fiction (what he called "interplanetary fiction"). He said the main thing, again, is atmosphere, mood, i.e., that a wonder and liberation from the confines of space, time, and natural law. The writer should focus on the near-paralyzing shock of "being off one's native earth."

Science fiction should not take place in the future, since we cannot easily avoid absurdities in our depictions of it (cf. Apple computers on the U.S.S. Enterprise). More importantly, the characters in the future would have to take for granted those things that amaze us, and since the function of the characters is to vicariously involve *us*, that

destroys the whole thing!

HPL advocated "hard science" science fiction, because he felt, again, that everything had to be written with plausible realism up to the point of revelation.

This also rules out implausible short-cuts such as learning alien languages too easily or having telepathic communication (again cf. *Star Trek*).

Since the point is to encounter the *un*earthly, do not make the alien world like earth. The aliens should be radically unhuman (not just pointed ears), with unpronouceable names. No "Tars Tarkas" nonsense should appear in the tale.

There should be no stock heroes, villians, damsels. Rather, those individuals who would actually face these things.

Those who today find themselves inspired by reading Lovecraft's work often seek to render the proverbial "sincerest form of flattery," writing pastiches. Yet it is painfully obvious, such fiction, usually Cthulhu Mythos fiction, falls dreadfully short of the desired mark. Few Mythos pastiches resemble Lovecraft's fiction in either letter or spirit, but we may dare to hope for better if today's Lovecraftians will but take the time to absorb Lovecraft's lessons for writers.

BLACK MAIL (Continued)

Rik Shepherd. 'Clubs' - Tim has got a good idea here, but it still doesn't solve the differing social backgrounds bit. There's quite a neat society in Tim Powers book *The Anubis Gates*. The club is an anti-sorcery society, has been active since the 17th century and by the 1800's has regressed to being purely a social club, whose members adopt some curious dress accesories (sic). The papers of the society, however, prove useful to the hero.

Marcus L. Rowland. A few comments on the *Cthulhu by Gaslight* review. I've few objections to the sourcebook, though the usual errata have crept in. The map of London police districts on page 24 shades the whole of London as the City of London. The city is approximately one square mile, correctly identified on page 18. On the price list pages the first column and a half use an L instead of a £ sign. One significant omission; though a lot of attention is devoted to Sherlock Holmes, the career of his biographer's other major creation, Professor Challenger, is ahrdly mentioned.

My main objection to this set is the basic idea of the scenario. Granted that it's almost impossible to write about Victorian England without mentioning Sherlock Holmes, and even accepting that the basic premise of the adventure is sound, the fact remains that players know too much about the guy; when I tried running this the players kept trying to spot Holmes in disguise, and never got too worried because they assumed that he'd show up at the last minute. It's a bit like the basic problem of the *Dr. Who* game; no matter how dangerous things seem to be, everyone knows that he'll save the universe eventually. The alternative plot with all the main characters changed, just doesn't convince.

All in all, a B+ rather than an A.

Mark Hetherington, Suffolk. "The Yorkshire Horrors" could easily be updated to the 1920's and still keep Holmes and Watson in it. According to Baring-Gould's *Sherlock Holmes* (Panther Books 1975), Holmes died in 1957 at the ripe old age of 103, and Watson died in 1929 aged 77. If you follow Conan Doyle exactly, the last Holmes case takes place in 1914, and there is no real reason to suppose that either of them died before the 1920's. However, if you do update the scenario, remember two things:-

i) In the 20's Holmes & Watson would be old men and so some of their abilities would reduce accordingly.

ii) Holmes & Watson would not share their rooms at 221B Baker Street, Watson would live somewhere in London, and Holmes would have retired to Bee Keeping near Eastbourne on the Sussex Downs, so some method of re-uniting the old friends would be needed.

Alternatively, you could ignore all of the above and use August Derleth's cahracter, Solar Pons who with hsi faithful companion Dr. Lyndon Parker kept 1920's London free of crime. Transfer all the stats of Holmes & watson to Pons & parker and no more need be done. Pons and Parker lived at 7B Praed Street, London W2, telephone: Ambassador 10000.

((And with that little piece of elementary deduction, I'll wrap up the column for this issue, keep the tentacles moist, see you soon...))

R'lyeh Reviews

H. P. LOVECRAFT'S DREAMLANDS Published by Chaosium Written by Sandy Petersen, Kerie L. Robson, Keith Herber and Friends. reviewed by Carl Ford.

It was inevitable that sometime along the way Chaosium would publish a Dreamlands supplement for *Call of Cthulhu*. Perhaps the most eagerly awaited pack, published for their Lovecraftian series so far, *Dreamlands* has a lot to live up to.

So what's in the box? I hear you ask, well the front package cover is graced by a fine painting of the Dreamlands themselves by Tom Sullivan. Inside one finds a large map of the "Earth's Dreamlands", which I found pretty accurate in light of the immense vagueness and contradiction concerning the Dreamland cities in Lovecraft's original works. Clearly a lot of effort went into this map and its author Carolyn Schultz deserves a pat on the back. Also included are two booklets, Dream Journeys and The Dreamlands together with another hearty pad of player handouts.

The Dreamlands booklet contains an introduction by Sandy Petersen where the Keeper is given guidelines on running his campaign, notes on dreaming, two new skills, exiting in the Dreamlands, atmosphere notes and other useful material. A useful key list of places is also included combining many Lovecraftian ideas along with those of Dreamlands disciple Gary Myers. A list of new spells, new monsters and inhabitants, and several maps are also included in the booklet. Characters can enter the Dreamlands by either falling asleep and "dreaming", that is to say that their physical bodies are left on earth whilst their wide-awake consciousness visits the Dreamlands or by entering physically. In many tales Lovecraft's Dreamlands or parts of the Dreamlands touch the earth in "real" places, the Enchanted Wood is perhaps the most obvious example and Petersen has decided to include it here in a very fine way. Not only does the Wood exist in the Dreamlands themselves, it also touches the earth at "the Black Forest in Germany, the California Redwoods, Transylvania" and "Roanoke Island in North Carolina." This enables the player to have his character stumble into the Dreamlands if he does not hold the desired requisites desired by the two guardians who protect unwary dreamers from the land of dreams. The rules are fairly easy to follow, despite their (intended) vagueness and Lovecraft's Dreamlands have been transferred to game mechanics remarkably well. One small gripe, Sandy suggests that if a dreaming investigator dies in the Dreamlands "he is shocked awake" whilst an investigator who physically enters, dies, "never reappears on Earth." I would prefer to have the dreaming investigator who dies whilst dreaming, die in real life - perhaps his death may be diagnosed as a heart attack (come to think of it, this could lead into an interesting scenario) whilst an investigator dying whilst having physically visiting the Dreamlands has his soul awaken, trapped forever in the land of Dreams, he might recover his consciousness, for instance, and attempt to find his way back to the real world (he may think he is still in the real world) and here starts a campaign wherein the investigator attempts to trace his path (an impossible one) back to the land of the waking. The rules allow for much development by Keeper and rightfully so - and Lovecraft's ideology is well executed in the claws of Chaosium.

Dream Journeys is a booklet filled with scenarios for adventures in the Dreamlands. The booklet is arranged in order - the first one is designed specifically for "inexperienced dreamers" whilst the last is designed for Keepers and players with an advanced idea of the state of play. "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream" by Jeff Okamoto finds the investigators being sent a box of chocolates for Christmas, which happens to be laced with a drug which enables them to travel to the Dreamlands (provided the Keeper can fit the chocs in without alerting the players suspicions). A nice starter to the campaign, Okamoto's piece lets the investigators get the feel of the Dreamlands, allows them sight of things to come and all without submitting them to danger or sanity loss.

"Captives of Two Worlds" by Sandy Petersen is a scenario which attempts to show us that the Dreamlands can be a source of information and are not necessarily to be avoided by the investigators. Players are introduced to the city of celephais, where judgement, evidence and tact must be presented before King Kuranes. A fine tale which works especially well with a small number of players.

"Pickman's Student" by Keith Herber puts the players on the case of a mysterious transformation which is taking place in Nelson Blakely. From here they are led by a tricky path

of clues, circumstance and shrewd deduction to the Dreamlands themselves where amongst other things, they are encounter a number of hideous dream-form monstrosities, a skeletal sorceress, a coven of witches and Richard Upton Pickman, who aids the characters in their quest, in his newly developed ghoul form. Somewhere amongst the chaos and confusion there is also a rather nasty Great Old One which, I may be mistaken, I believe to have been invented specially for this scenario.

"Season of the Witch" by Richard T. Launius is an extremely well-detailed scenario which doesn't come off quite so well as the other scenarios. Despite drawing heavily upon factual history concerning witch-trials and the like, "Witch" contains too many recently developed aspects to prove original. Several Lovecraftian locations are used including Arkham, and borrows very heavily much of its material from Lovecraft's "Dreams in the Witch-House" in fact, upon first glance it is very similar to a scenario I wrote myself entitled "Abduction in Arkham" published in *Dagon #6*, but with more padding.

"Lemon Sails" by Phil Frances is set entirely in the Dreamlands, no lengthy introductions, wherein your character has to enter, nope, the charcters are smack-bam in the lands, they know the ropes and history. A dying race of beings consult the investigators to help them find the remaining two members of his clan, who have disappeared. The search spans several strange and wonderful cities, Dylath-Leen, Sarrub and Yundu housing many eerie mysteries and secrets. Finally the investigators come face-to-face with a new race of cthulhoid-like beings who aren't quite so wonderful.

The scenario booklet is rounded off with a very, difficult piece entitled "The Land of Lost Dreams" by Mark Morrison (yes, the bloke who sometimes has his scrawlings printed in this same zine, if we're lucky) which, surprisingly, is the best of the bunch, (he hides his head shamefully). The scenario begins on earth in a hospital ward, no less. The investigators are visiting a friend when they hear some commotion along the corridor. What follows is a genuinely scary incident involving what looks, upon first glance, to be a demonic possession. Having witnessed the hideous scene the investigators are drawn into a very complex plot, involving a long journey through the Dreamlands in search of the dreaming victim of the possession. You, as a Keeper, will find this scenario very fulfilling in both terms of Keeper/player interaction, storyline and inevitable goal. One point though, don't attempt this scenario unless you fully understand all the possible paths the piece can lead investigators to take, you must try and guide them on their way, by skill, will and cunning or the group won't succeed in the task. Aside from the storyline there are quite a few little jokes and several parts of the plot remind me of elements from a few Monty Python sketches, come to think of it the plot does run like Python's "Holy Grail" movie. But don't let that put you off running it - it's nasty, frightening, gory and well - aimed at a mature audience. Incidentally, I have much respect for a company who adopt an attitude where censorship is way down the list of priorities. After all its not many professional games companies who allow the writer's use of "Fuck Off" to get beyond the proof-reading stage.

On summary, as I said before, this package had a lot to live up to, to my sanity-drained mind its the best thing Chaosium have spawned so far for their cthulhoid followers. Well done all concerned.

GHOSTBUSTERS Role Playing Game. West End Games (With Chaosium Inc.)
Reviewed by Marcus L. Rowland.

Why bother reviewing this game in a magazine devoted to *Call of Cthulhu*? The simple answer is that it takes a very different approach to the supernatural, played very much for laughs, but still relates to many of the ideas of the Mythos It's also designed by Chaosium Inc., the creators of *Call of Cthulhu*, and anyone who is interested in *CoC* probably wants to keep abreast of the companies other projects.

The rules of the game are ridiculously simple, based on four characteristics (called traits) with four derived talents; for example, Brains with the talent Falsify Tax Return. The player is given twelve points to distribute amongst the traits, with no trait less than 1 or more than 7. Talents are rated 3 points above the base trait. To use a trait or talent the player simply rolls a dice for each point, with the cumulative total determining success or failure. One of the dice must always be a special "ghost" die, with the Ghostbusters symbol replacing the 6 and counted as zero if it appears. If the roll exceeds a difficulty number assigned to a task (for example, parking a big car safely is a 'Move' activity with difficulty 5, paying no taxes is a 'Brains' activity with

difficulty 20) the activity succeeds. If the 'ghost' appears Something Bad Happens (the designer's capitals, not mine). Severity varies with the degree of success or failure of the activity. Brownie points (which also function as a form of hit point) can be added to the dice roll before it is made. If you run out of brownie points you can trade off a trait for twenty more points, but this is irrevocable. Injury usually results in hospital treatment and huge bills for medicine and equipment replacements.

Supernatural creatures have two main attributes, Power and Ectopresence, plus associated talents. Power is used to determine the number of dice used in a ghost's attacks. Ectopresence is toughness, the ability to resist Proton Pack attacks, and can range from 1 (a minor apparition) to hundreds (Zuul and similar Bad News dieties). Not all supernatural creatures are vulnerable to proton pack attacks. Ghosts also use the 'ghost' dice, but a 'ghost' roll indicates an especially favourable result.

Rules cover Weird Science (the ability to convert junk into odd gadgets, somewhat like Toon's 'Illogical Logic'), ghost generation and use, and a range of common plot situations. These range from conventional ghost busting (a haunted apartment house) to encounters with aliens, mad scientists, and sinister dieties. Most of them use plot twists to stop the game degenerating into a simple 'see the creature, zap it, take the money, and run' routine.

I couldn't find any obvious flaws, apart from a fairly heavy emphasis on an American setting that could make it difficult to base campaigns in other countries. Play is fast and fairly chaotic, rewarding players who can produce quick ideas and excuses. The box contains two books (for players and the referee), handouts, equipment cards, and six dice. Since I've seen pre-production proofs, rather than the final version, I can't give page counts.

Artwork includes stills from the film and sketches. Most suffered from poor reproduction in my copy, but production printing should be satisfactory.

Chaosium seem to have done their work well, turning a restricted background into a game allowing interdimensional and time travel, sinister aliens, and a whole range of paranormal and supernatural plots. There is no compatability with *Call of Cthulhu*; however, there are lots of in-jokes for *CoC* players; for example, one of the scenario outlines involves a book called the Neopublican, another is an attempt to defeat the sinister 'Keepers of the Copper Midnight'! It remains to be seen if the cost of this game will be justified by the quality of future scenarios; with the exception of the film tie-in, the system offers few advantages over *Paranoia* and *Toon*, and will probably be a good deal more expensive.

NECROSCOPE by Brian Lumley. Published by Grafton. Paperback. 511pp. £3.50.
Reviewed by John Halleck.

Brian Lumley's previous works have ranged from a vast number of Cthulhu Mythos tales & novels of both traditional and revolutionary content, to heroic fantasy as well as his more recent efforts in contemporary horror - the *Psychomech* trilogy. Lumley's latest offering was released late June. After having awoken in its dark and silent mausoleum, the dreaded Thing crawled and clawed its way through the moon-lit graveyards to finally arrive on the bookshelves. And there you should find it, sitting, in its little pile of grave dirt, at a bookstore near you, awaiting your arrival... & your perusal of the dark horrors and entities contained therein.

Necroscope is good - very good.

The writing is of the usual highly compulsive quality and the story & plotting are superlative. But the greatest attribute that this novel possesses is the concept of the Necroscope itself. It's most simply explained as follows: Just as microscopes are used to view microscopic images and telescopes are used to view distant objects, the Necroscope is able to "view" the thoughts of the dead... and converse with them... But the Necroscope is no spiritual medium who holds seances but, rather, a wanderer of graveyards, who silently talks with his new-found "friends", and it is through the Necroscope that we learn what it feels like to be dead; their thoughts and their secrets.

The book concerns itself chiefly with the lives of two men; from their childhood & puberty and awakening of their talents, through their rites of adulthood to their final confrontation... & beyond. The Necroscope of the title is Harry Keogh. His talent is unique, there is only (and as far as we are told there has only ever been) one Necroscope. Harry strives towards full understanding of his talent and once his powers reach their potential we can only be thankful that he's on the side of the Good Guys. In the Bad Guys corner is

Boris Dragosani, a Wallachian (don't call him a Russian, he doesn't like it... & that's bad). Contrary to the cover blurb he is not a Necroscope but a Necromancer. There are differences that become all too clear. Dragosani's mentor is a being of immense power, and it's lucky for us that he's chained down. He is a vampire - but not the vampire found in Stoker's *Dracula* and olden legend, oh no - this is one of the True Vampire's; one of those immortal and almost infinately powerful entities which gave origin to the puny fictional vampires that we are familiar with today.

The storyline flashes backwards and forwards between the exploits of Keogh & Dragosani, and the final novel as a whole contains many meorable scenes & characters. I dare not reveal any of my favourite scenes to you in fear of giving away too much of the plot, but I will mention two of my favourite members of the supporting cast - the talented Mongol, Max Batu and the pycho-with-reason Shukshin. There are also guest appearances made by the great mathemetician Möbius and KGB director Yuri Andropov, amongst other notables. The plot slowly builds towards an inexorable climax; by the time the last hundred pages are reached the story is moving at such a pace that you can only be helplessly carried along by the events drawing the novel to its conclusion.

I could pick a couple of minor quibbles with the story, but I think these are essentially a matter of personal taste - they in no way detract from the book's quality. Some parts of the book I did find reminiscent of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone* i.e. the young man whose psychic talent haunts him, & F. Paul Wilson's *The Keep* i.e. the discovery of the true vampire entity, but even so - *Necroscope* has an originality all its own. For those gaming affictionados out there, you'll be glad to know that there are a considerable number of ideas with game inclusion potential, not least of which are the detailed psychic powers. There's also the vampire itself, which is just too Cthulhoid to be coincidental.

Reading this book will leave you wanting for more and it is reassuring to know that the author is currently putting the finishing touches onto *Necroscope II* and planning a possible third book in the series. As for the Necroscope itself, I believe it to be one of the most original creations the horror genre has seen for a long time & as such Mr. Lumley and his novel deserve recognition.

CALL OF CTHULHU Third Edition Rules. Written by Sandy Petersen. Published by Chaosium Inc. and Games Workshop Ltd. £9.95. Reviewed by John Halleck.

The hardcover Third edition of the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, reproducing the *Call of Cthulhu* Second edition rulebook, 1920's supplement (again second edition) & *Cthulhu Companion* supplement all under one cover in a deluxe edition is, for me, a big let-down. Oh, it's nice enough, and especially for beginning players, but otherwise...

The cover to the book is superb and a great improvement on the original box cover. The eight colour plates are lavishly reproduced on glossy paper to enhance the rulebook no end, though most of the plates have previously seen the light of day and hence few of the plates, if any, are unique to the book. Apparently the only rule change is one concerning automatic weapons and this new rule can also be found within the introduction to *Terror from the Stars*. The only other edition to this rulebook are illustrations for those Mythos entities detailed in both the second edition rules and the *Cthulhu Companion*. These illustrations are small sketches added beside the creature descriptions and they vary in quality from the mediocre & fair to the reasonably good & very good. Although they tend to reduce the chapters to a "monster-manual" appearance, I think they are a rather nice addition.

So, why the let-down? Well my main complaint is one of lost potential. Instead of incorporating the *Cthulhu Companion* with the rules, it has been simply reproduced, as if it were an appendix to the original rules. So, the third edition now contains two sections of monsters, two insanities sections, two adventure sections etc instead of one complete section of each. There is really no excuse for such a lack of effort on the part of Chaosium, Games Workshop or whoever is to blame, and I'd be interested to know the reason for this shoddiness.

As it is, the third edition *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook is nothing special and I'd suggest that Keepers who were planning to buy this would spend their money in better ways by paying the extra & purchasing either *Cthulhu by Gaslight* or the excellent *Dreamlands* supplements.

((Last issue's review of Chasoium's *Cthulhu by Gaslight* supplement was by Phil Anderson, whose name was not included on the credit for that same piece)).

Editors Introduction

Following last issues brief piece entitled "Sleep, Purchance to Dream?" by Richard Watts I have received a couple of other articles on much the same subject. Dreaming is big news at the moment as owners of Chaosium's *Dreamlands* supplement know only too well. While not wanting to re-tread the same path as last issue's essay, upon reading the following submission I felt that the author had some excellent ideas which hadn't been touched on until now, as well as providing some fine reading. So, the question remained "To publish or reject?" I chose the former and I hope you'll agree my decision was a good one. Enjoy!

Plagued by Dreams

by Mark Morrison

On watch, Hans was suddenly aware that something was wrong. He didn't know what. Something was wrong. He picked up his torch and moved away from the fire, cutting the dark with the sharp beam of light. He shivered as he was gnawed exploratively by the cold night air which had been waiting beyond the fire's warmth. Still, he could see nothing. He could hear nothing. Nothing? But surely there must be - breathing? Frantically he rushed back to the sleeping-bagged figures sprawled about the fire, and only then did he notice the dark red stains flowing slowly outward from each of the rents and slashes in the fabric. That was when he noticed the blazing lidless red eyes twenty feet above him. Firebright jaws opened, and flame spewed from the glowing throat, turning Hans into a shrieking living torch.

The others were awakened by the screaming, to find Hans rolling around in the blazing coals of the campfire.

Dreams can be unsettling. Dangerous. Terminal. They are a device which no *Call of Cthulhu* Keeper can pass up; an opportunity to give Investigators distorted perceptions of warped reality and screaming nightmare. In the above example, Hans had actually fallen asleep on watch, and none of the events were real; he wakes when he topples into the fire. The Keeper needn't have told the player that Hans had fallen asleep, just given the events; thus, it is initially a relief to learn that his comrades are not dead and that there is no monstrous firebreathing horror, but the waking proves to be as bad as the nightmare...

The purpose of this article is to give Keepers a few ideas on using Investigators' dreams to their disadvantage. This is a feature which is common in Mythos stories. The source that immediately shambles to mind in connection with dreams are of course *The Dreamlands*, which Chaosium have now detailed in a lavish new supplement (which you should all slime out and buy straight away; biased? Who, me?); but not all dreams need be journeys to far-off Celephais. Keepers should not forget the ordinary dream, or the extraordinary nightmare.

There are so many ways to use dreams, and in each case there are a number of decisions to be made. Do you want to give away a hint or insight into the scenario, or just give them a rough time? Are you going to make it obvious to them that they are dreaming, or are you going to feign reality? Is a character going to have power of normal action and speech in the dream? Are they going to be in their body, or disembodied, or in someone else's? Are they going to wake in their bed, or are you going to sleepwalk them somewhere else? There are so many options that you should be able to mix devices, and keep one lurch ahead of the players. The following are a few ideas I use for dreams, but dip in the nighted depths of your imagination to come up with varients which suit you.

The most fiendish, and most successful (not to mention the most low-down mean and dirty!) is not to tell the player(s) that they are dreaming. Sneak the dreams in either while the characters are safely asleep in their beds (teeling them that they 'wake up', into the events of the dream) or, better still, look for situations in which the charcater might fall asleep without the player knowing - whilst keeping a long watch; in the passenger seat of a long car journey; sprawled on a deck-chair on a leisurely cruise; reading far

into the night over an old tome; and so on. As long as the player doesn't know, this allows you to absolutely run wild. Players can find, or see, their comrades torn apart (as happened to poor old Hans); normal things can suddenly become abnormal ("That room-service waiter you just hesitantly let into your room? He pustulently explodes into a writhing mess of leprous tentacles."); players can 'wake up' to be 'killed' (by strange knife-bearing figures in their room); they can 'wake up' on mortuary slabs (preferably with a few bits opened out to give them a good grip on the situation - for example, Keeper: "There's a glistening ropey mass on your stomach." Harold: "Euurrrghhh! What is it?" Keeper: "Entrails." Harold: "Eurrgghhh! I push them off!! Yuk!" Keeper: "That hurts." Harold: "Why?" Keeper: They're yours. Roll Sanity." Harold: "Eurrrrghhhhhgarglegargle.."); in short, there's no end to what you can deviously arrange. You could say they walk up in the morning, and ask what they are doing. When they go out to get the milk and news-paper, have them find the slaughtered remains of the paperboy, the milkman and their dog across the front lawn, while their next-door neighbour cheerily says hello, showing a big mouthful of fangs, and continues watering red roses, with blood. Get the picture? (And wish you didn't? Good.)

All of these tend to move to a climax, at which point the character eill wake up. More and nastiest is to have the player 'wake', into another dream, as in An American Werewolf in London when the nurse gets it. (Keeper: "And then you wake up." Harold: "Arrrrghhhhh!" Julie: "Harold! What's wrong? You were screaming. Did you have a nightmare?" Harold: "Urg, [gasp] it was - horrible. I was [gag]... dead, on this slab. God!" Keeper: "As Julie gets closer, Harold, you notice something odd about her, or is it that her face is sliding off? Roll Sanity." Harold: "Arrrrgghhhhh!" Keeper: "You wake up." Julie: Harold! What's wrong? You were screaming. Did you have a nightmare?" Harold: gibber gibber). Alternatively, they can wake into a reality worse than the dream (suddenly staring up into a rotting face with dripping jaws poised just above their throat, for example.) They may not accept this as being true, which would be just as bad. Basically, the objective is to harass the players until they can no longer safely tell reality from nonreality, and just sit in the corner and whimper. Well done.

That's just one way to use dreams, a particularly nasty one at that. All of the examples I gave were fairly grue; another option is to give the players vaguely disturbing dreams, with something just a little wrong. I have an evil fondness for the shock approach though, as it provides such an effective screaming full-stop at which you tell the player they wake up. (I guarantee they will stare at you in disbelief, and then lunge for your throat. Have a steaming cup of coffee on hand as a deterrent.)

An alternative to this sort of dreaming (that which closely follows reality, so much so that you don't bother to tell the player that this is not really happening), is to have things so strange that the players are fully aware they must be dreaming, i.e. hell, this can't be real, can it? Twisted scenery, leaping and gibbering figures, blasphemously wrong skylines, daemonic noises, weird perspectives; pretty much anything you like. In this case, you may be intending to show the player some ominous scene, perhaps as the result of some forbidding text they had foolishly read, or as a result of the unwanted attentions of aome malevolent being. After the player has the vision, they could wake into a reassuring nightmare, as per above - "You are thankfully awoken - but by a strange sumbling plopping noise at the window. You know those fleshless elastic humanoids you saw near the alter? There's one climbing over your windowsill." And perhaps it really is.

Attendant with this vision, nowhere are dreams more terrifying and powerful than when they relate directly to the plot of the scenario, showing the dreamer/thing they have met or will meet. As the characters are under a fair degree of stress (there's an understate-ment! How about scared shitless?) during an investigation, it is only logical that their dreams will reflect this anxiety. Dwell on the fears and hatreds of the players. For ex-ample, when I ran the remarkable campaign *The Fungi from Yuggoth*, Francesca Le Monte developed a particularly virulent hatred of Baron Hauptmann (directly proportional to the amount he cost her in dental bills - think about it), so whilst in Egypt she was 'woken' by a cloaked figure in her tent. A knife was drawn, and plunged into her - impale! Just before she died, the cowl fell away, revealing the laughing face of Hauptmann. And then she woke up.

Of course, the Investigators' dreams don't have to be all bad - one would go mad if one had nothing but nightmares every night. True, perhaps this is desirable, but I mean to say... Occasionally there will be a dream which could be helpful, or soothing, or relaxing. It's up to you whether the character is rudely awoken by the house burning down around their ears. Or you could turn a pleasant dream sour by following it up with a nasty one. Let's say that Francesca, snoozing in a deckchair unawarés, dreams she sees Hauptmann sneaking up on her with malicious intent. Desperately she leaps up and throws herself against him, knocking him overboard and into the waves. Gratefully she slumps back and sleeps once more, and then wakes for real, unsure as to what may or may not have happened. Except, that night in her cabin, she is 'woken' when she hears the splashing at her porthole as a corpse tries to climb in, a bloated propellor-sliced fish eaten horror which resembles Baron Hauptmann...

Other dreams which are possible are precognitive ones, and for ideas on those I refer you to my gibberings on the subject in *DAGON #12*. Besides this, there are countless other sorts of dreamings I am not going to cover, but I urge you to explore yourself. For starters, having no psychological training, I have not even attempted to explain why people dream, and how they could be worked in to give the players a few allegorical insights into their characters. I have not covered *The Dreamlands*, nor have I allowed for the use of the new dreaming skill. I have not given consideration to the Dreamtime of the Australian Aborigines. I have not covered the numerous examples in Lovecraft's stories where dreams form a central role. In short, delve, consider, and research these yourself. All of them are too valuable to be passed up. A customary word of caution is not to overdo it, or you will lose shock effect. Once every few games should catch them unawares.

Speaking of games, how does all this stuff work in game terms? I usually choose the character I want to pick on, rather than randomize it, and have it based on the machinations of the plot - usually I select the most paranoid, on whom I can use other pre-existing phobias to enhance upon. You may prefer to use the high-POW character. For each

(Continued on page 34)

Fear and it's uses

by Andrew Whittaker

Some emotions are easier to convey in roleplaying games than others. Fear is one of the most difficult, and fear is the central element of *Call of Cthulhu*.

Awe, for instance, is easy to convey. I merely have to read my players the wonderful details of some alien city's workings, and perhaps let slip a few mind-boggling statistics, and the players will feel their characters' awe.

But fear is something else. *Cthulhu* is always a game of mystery, sometimes of high adventure, and is great fun. But how often is it genuinely eerie? How often have you sent a shiver down the players spines? Three times, I believe my record stands at; but from these rare moments I believe I've come some way in distilling the elements that produce the fear in a roleplaying game.

Events

These are the happenings within the scenario. First off, there are two types of fear to be encountered in roleplaying. The first is the gooseflesh-inducing fear one receives upon reading a particularly good ghost story, and the sort which Keepers in *Cthulhu* strive for. The second is material fear - fear for the characters welfare - and a poor substitute for the real thing. You can create that type of fear by merely saying "300 zombies have surrounded the house and are climbing in through every window", but it hardly makes for satisfying roleplaying.

Events do not necessarily have to be dangerous to be frightening. One of the most memorable events from my game was one where blood began to form on items of furniture for no apparent reason. There was no danger to the characters but the episode really did get to them.

Don't be lured by over-using shocks as in the case of horror films. In a visual medium (in a film for instance), shocks can work very well. But if you are having the scene described to you, then the facts can be far less effective. Use them, by all means, but don't count on their shock value.

Events can help build up the tension, and tension can lead to fear. false alarms are good for this - cats scratching at the front door, windows smashing during a storm, the list is endless. Tension is at its highest when the players have a good idea that something is going to happen, but not knowing exactly what or when.

I suggest reading "*Oh, Whistle And I'll Come To You, My Lad*", by M. R. James (if you haven't done so already). You should find it very useful in revealing how to install the power of fear.

Delivery

The way you describe events is all-important. It's no good having terrifying events lined up if you simply describe them along the lines of: "A Deep One comes out of the sea and attacks you". Your words of description must be carefully chosen and delivered carefully.

It may seem as though I am dancing on Lovecraft's grave when I say this, but descriptions of "bubbling, hellish, protoplasmic blashemies" do absolutely nothing to scare the players. It is far better to use the sparse and delicate descriptions of Stephen King, M. R. James, Clive Barker and Ray Bradbury, with use of word association and delicate description; a stiletto rather than a sledgehammer. Give the players just enough to tip their imaginations into the scene.

There are more techniques of delivery than just lucid (not lurid) prose. Turning the lights low is a good method of achieving an eerie atmosphere, or better still, turn the main light out and spotlight the play area with a lamp, candle or other minor light source. You may decide to experiment with sound effects, but be careful here. The sounds of a Cairo bazaar or a thunderstorm played quitely in the background may be effective, as might a recording of weird thumping noises heard from upstairs; but unless you possess excellent audio equipment, give incidental music a miss - it's far more likely to be intrusive than to complement the atmospehere.

In your prose delivery concerning ordinary matters, don't fall into the Lovecraft trap of using an oppressive style, with impending doom carried on every word. Instead make it pleasant and mundane, perhaps slightly more comfortable than you usually would. This makes the horror, when it comes, a shocking intrusion and all the more frightening for it.

Don't be afraid to manipulate the situation to make it seem more hopeless or desperate than

it really is, if you feel it would make for a better game. Try not to diffuse the atmosphere. This can happen in a number of ways, but most often it is through humour. Don't be afraid to let the players have a laugh when the heat is off (indeed, it makes for a more pleasant game all round), but shut them up when they're in danger of ruining carefully built up tension through wisecracks in the face of shoggoths.

Participation

This final element is more important than the other two combined. You and your players really have to let yourselves go, to *act*, to feel the situation.

You all have to work for a good game, you can't just sit back and hope for the best. The Keeper must make the world come alive for his players, and the players, in turn, must strive to make their characters far more than just lists of skills and attributes. More, than this, you must all *want* it to happen. If you do that you can't go far wrong and with a little practice, *Call of Cthulhu* will be fully rewarding - and very *eerie*.

PLAGUED BY DREAMS (continued)

dream I usually enforce a SAN-roll on waking (because people can't very well go insane while dreaming), which if failed results in the loss of one point. This is low, but then Investigators have precious little SAN, and you will have got good mileage out of scaring the player anyway. The Dreaming skill I don't use, except in *Dreamlands*; I don't tend to give the players much control, it adds to the feeling of terror and helplessness (I'm sure you all know how it is - you can't run/swim/fly quite fast enough, oh God it's going to get me, arrrgghhh...). Another justifciation is that in *Dreamlands* the characters can be really affected by what happens to them, physically and mentally - in that sense, the dream is real, so a skill is needed. But I am talking nightmares here.

A suggested bibliography would probably be useful at this point, to show where my ideas stemmed from and to give players a few more. Well, forget it. There are so many sources, I could write as much again trying to cover them all! Briefly though, the story I read most recently was "The Horror at Oakdeene" by Brian Lumley, in which the reading of a certain passage of *Cthaat Aquadingen* makes the main character susceptible to dreams of Yibb-Tstll; it is within the final dream that he takes part in a dread summoning of the Thing. The novel which impressed me most on the subject of dreaming, from the author who is my prime inspiration in any efforts in the field, is Incarnate by Ramsey Campbell. Read it and you will recognize quite a few of the elements I have described. You will also be enthralled, intrigued and disturbed. Enough said.

Once you unleash this lot of ideas on your screaming players, don't be surprised if coffee consumption in your campaign rockets up a hundredfold, for the characters may reasonably prefer to stay awake! The weird and abominable effects that can be achieved in the Investigators' sleep, wherein you are not bound by any constraints of logic, fairness or politeness, are tremendous. If the players complain, after all, it's their characters' subconscious that is bringing it upon themselves, isn't it?

When I try to sleep at night
I can only dream in red
The outside world is black and white
We've only one colour dead

- from "Biko", by Peter Gabriel

BLACK MAIL

Brian Lumley, Devon. Fangs for *DAGON 13*. How come you got the Carson illo on the front and my photograph on the back? Anyway, I can't say other but that I liked the issue very much indeed, and the photograph did come out well for a rather poor b&w shot with a small camera. I do note, however, that you cut the picture down and so excluded the tentacles. Carl, I am *proud* of my tentacles! Let it pass...

Other points of interest: I note that "names" are suddenly appearing in your pages, such as E. P. Berglund, Randy Everts, Bob Price and so on. You know you've cracked it when old hand Mythos freaks like this start to take an interest.

P.S. Small pieces of class art like P.2 & 14 really stand out well and improve an issue's looks.

David Martin, Lancaster. *DAGON 13* is another great issue. Before reading it I knew nothing about the amount of material written about the Mythos by Brian Lumley. His characters and ideas sound really fascinating, especially his projection of the Mythos in different directions.

House of the Temple was excellent. My only slight complaint being that in the space between *DAGON*'s the atmosphere is lost without a re-read.

T. H. Zunder, Sheffield. I was most taken back with all the Brian Lumley material, it clearly and simply explained his role in the Mythos. In fact, could you publish the *Weirdbook* address so I can hunt down their publications. I like the sound of the aquatic horrors that Brian deals with. "The House of the Temple" was very good.

Rik Shepherd, Cheshire. "House of the Temple". Excellent. Brian seems to have a clear, concise style, avoiding hyperbole until the climax. I do find, particularly with HPL that repitions of words like "blasphemous", "unshallowed" and "Cyclopean" lose effect and become rather laughable after a while. Lumley's characters also come across as people, rather than as cardboard victims as many do in short stories (I'm thinking particularly of the Dahl-style "Tale with a Twist" which is more of a shaggy dog story than anything else).

Neil Grant, I was glad to see you featuring Brian Lumley to such an extent, and while I had heard of him and read some of his work before, I had no idea how much Mythos fiction he had written, and it was good to see some of it in *DAGON*. i.e. "Whistler" and "On recieving a small RPG piece" - maybe not Mythos, but fun!

Marcus L. Rowland, London. All the Brian Lumley stuff was interesting, though I'm not sure that I agree with his interpretation of the Mythos. Then again, I'm not sure that I agree with MY interpretation of the Mythos. Liked the story, loved the poem.

Sean Kenny, E. Yorks. Thanks for printing "The House of the Temple". It was great, really dramatic and tense. Excellent! That was the first Lumley story I've read, where can I get more of his stuff?

The only gripe I have is that the monster in the pool was not well enough described. Such a good creation should have been better detailed.

((I disagree there. The great thing about the majority of Mythos tales is that the monsters are NOT described in great detail - they are left to the imagination of the reader, this is true with the vast works of Campbell, most Lovecraft, Bloch and especially true of Lumley's works. Lack of description makes the monsters seem all the more alien, it is more horrifying for the reader to imagine (in my view) the writers creation, than have it presented in three dimensional four colour description as it were. The same can be said of works of celluloid as any person who has seen the classic "The Haunting" will tell you.))

Mark Morrison, Carnegie, Australia. "The House of the Temple" screamed to a suitably shattering conclusion, I like the incestuous reference to Oakdeene. I disagree with T. H. Zunder's view that stories are preferable to scenarios. Sure, a good story is better than a bad scenario, but isn't a good scenario likewise better than a bad story? The obvious danger of converting fiction is the players may have already encountered it already which

is not a danger (if they're honest!) with scenarios. Also, there is a lot of fiction in the world in print and on film, but far fewer *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios!

David Martin. The essay tracing the *Cthaat Aquadingen* was well and interestingly written. It gave a brief taste of all those Lumley characters I have not yet come across.

Richard Watts, Victoria, Australia. I like your piece on *Cthaat Aquadingen*, it really covers the book well, giving hints and histories. When I wrote "Tiahuanaco" I was staying at my grandmother's, and just decided that the book sounded darkly forboding. I knew nothing about it at that stage, but now it seems that hints about Mu could actually be contained in it.

T. H. Zunder. *Cthaat Aquadingen* was exactly what I'd like to see, a Mythos artifact traced through its literary history so we can see what has been written and what it leads to. In fact, is there is such a thing as a "Companion to the Mythos" around?

((As far as I know there is not a definative "A-Z" as it were, a magazine entitled *Nyctalops* did begin something along this line, and it was pretty good too (though of course it only lingered on each subject for about a paragraph). However, as I understood it the guide was only printed bit by bit and following lack of readership interest was axed after only one issue. There have been a number of books published detailing "lists" os Mythos tales, writers, etc. of which the finest is probably *Reader's Guide to the Cthulhu Mythos* an 88 page study attempting to catalogue every Mythos entry, fictional, study, essay, author and otherwise up until 1973. The tome was compiled by R. E. Weinberg and E. P. Berglund and there is currently a third update of the same listing being compiled. There have also been numerous other books on the subject, some good and some bad. But to my knowledge there has not been a book published along the lines which Tom describes. Perhaps a more knowledgeable reader will correct me)).

Mark Morrison. Your piece on *Cthaat Aquadingen* is an illuminating and damnably comprehensive study - well done, I wish I had your resources, patience and unflinching thirst for terrible knowledge. I note that you are following in the footsteps of Robert M. Price and swinging away from previous studies of tomes in the 'zine, by which I mean you have adopted a literary approach to the tome; rather than the fictional approach, presenting information for Keepers and spells. Both methods are valid, but how about a postscript next issue with ideas for game mechanics? Or am I being immature and peurile and offending your artistic sensibilities? Regardless, well done.

((Well, as I said before, *Dagon* is attempting to treat its readers intelligently. By that, I believe if reader's really want to incorporate such tomes in their campaign, let them do it their way. Besides, if I offered my advise on game mechanics, I could well be proven wrong, when the next Mythos tale comes out declaring that the *Eltdown Shards* has nothing at all to do with "Dread Spell of Azathoth" etc. Readers can use the tomes in their campaign in whatever way they like, and besdies it doesn't come as second knowledge to the investigator when the Keeper decides that Harry Callahan has found a copy of the eldritch tome and that it contains such and such spells. Whilst on the subject of the *Shards*. I have been sent the following letter concerning a matter which appeared in issue 11.))

Stacy Clark, California, USA. The seemingly irreconcilable conflict, of the *Eltdown Shards* being either a book passed down through the centuries or a collection of fragmentary baked clay tablets discovered at the turn of the century, can be resolved if they are both taken as true.

It seems that the *Eltdown Shards* were passed down through the ages in written form and that at the turn of the century, with the discovery of the clay tablets, a new "corrected" edition of the *Eltdown Shards* was published. This would make Reverend Arthur Brooke-Winters-Hall's translation of the *Eltdown Shards* a variant version of the copy mentioned by Alonzo Typer.

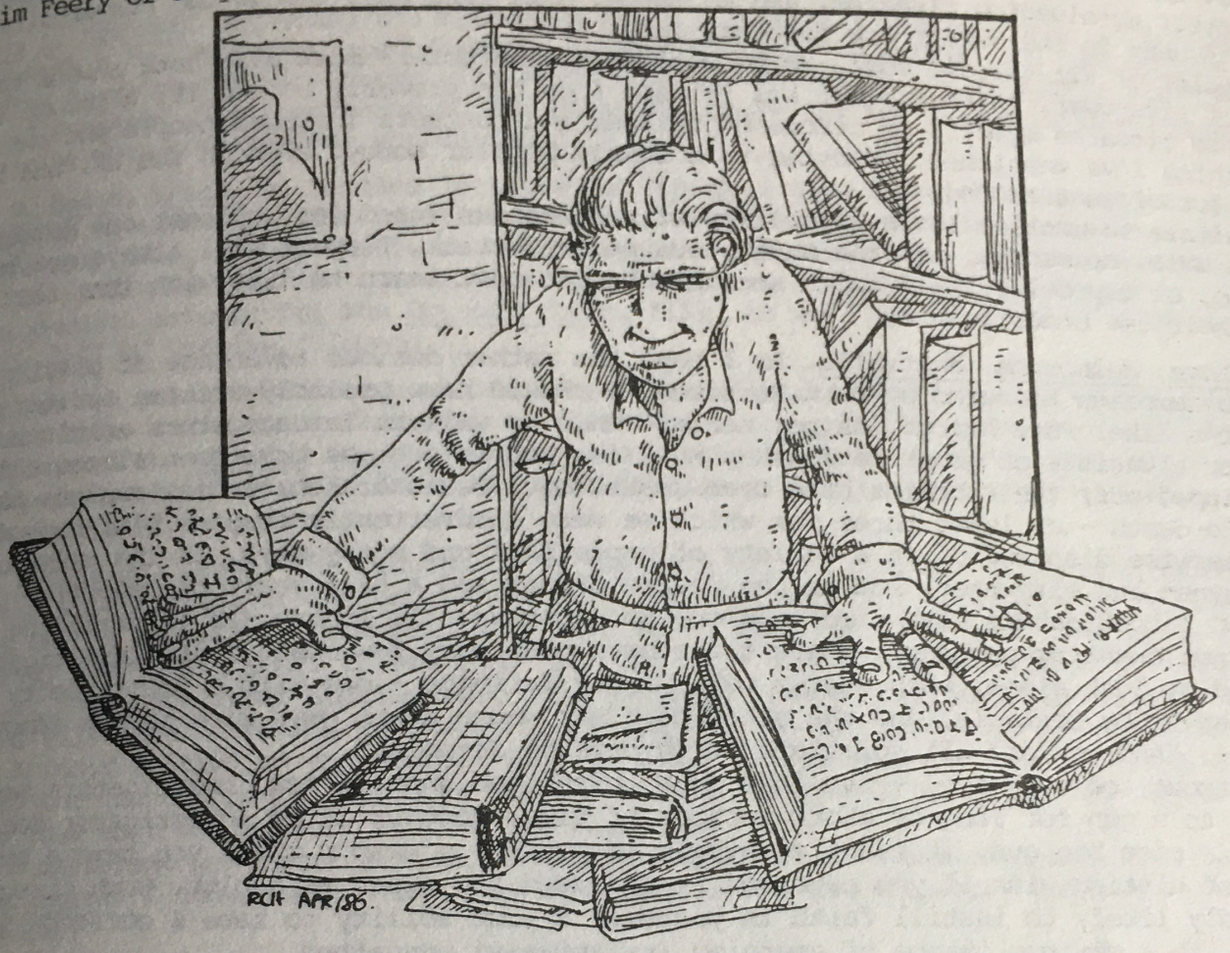
This theory is based on the passage in "The Challenge from Beyond" stating that Reverend A. B. Winters-Hall's translation is "a surprisngly long brochure in view of the limited number of 'shards' existing."

Reverend Winters-Hall most likely had a copy of the *Eltdown Shards* in book form and that he used this copy to fill out the fragmentary translation he made from the clay tablets.

The reason for writing a new version of the *Eltdown Shards* is readily apparent. The

textual errors caused by its multiple translations made down through the centuries. The clay tablets are more fragmentary, but as it is inscribed in its original prehuman language it does not suffer from multiple translation errors.

As stated earlier Reverend Winters-Hall's translation of the *Eltdown Shards* may be viewed in the same light as Brian Lumley's *Original Notes on the Necronomicon* by occultist Joachim Feery or Eddy bertin's *Liyuhh*.



Iain Smedley, Herts. Brian Lumley's "miniature" letter was most entertaining, and very suitable for inclusion in the issue. The interview was also most interesting. Looking at the page count, it seems rather long, but it was certainly worthwhile. The use of quotations 'framed' the interview very well, and the information about new books etc. was well worth having.

Rik Shepherd. The interview - in the old fashioned style, question and answer, rather than trendy style description, with no direct quotes & so forth was very interesting... not least 'cos it shows the extent of Lumley's work - seems that when people think of a Mythos writer, it's usually an American (Derleth, Smith, Long et al) so it's heartening to see a British writer setting Mythos tales in Britain.

((Now for the last words on the Shoggoth's vs Guns debate, it seems that things aren't over yet, not by a long tentacle...))

David Martin. I find that most parties start off unarmed; but as the investigation of affairs deepen the neccessity to protect themselves becomes greater. This protection (in my experience of having run *Masks*) was mainly from the proliferation of insane cultists in every city visited. I imagine that most experienced Keepers allow players to create the character they want. Trying to justify having good gun skills without 'power gaming' for many characters would not be easy. There is nothing more pleasurable than watching a group of blue-eyed, innocent investigators degenerate to their animal instincts.

Marcus L. Rowland. I know that the Shoggoths Don't Kill People debate has been dragging on for some time. Perhaps it's time to point out that even today almost anyone can get a shotgun licence - the Police don't have the power to insist on storage conditions or other restrictions. This was also very true in the twenties. Shotguns are VERY dangerous

weapons at close range with normal ammunition, and it's fairly easy to get solid slugs which give a lot more range and damage. I have a twelve-bore slug which is approximately the size of a large thinble, and must weigh around fifty grams.
The items you can currently get on a shotgun licence include a smooth-bore version of the Uzi submachine gun (modified for single shots, not bursts), smooth-bore versions of most other autoloading firearms, and an ex-WW2 anti-tank gun, though the finger-sized bullets used in the latter are somewhat rare.
The point of all this is that, to be realistic, characters must also have access to this sort of firepower. If they can't buy it then they can probably borrow it; although I'm not into firearms myself, my circle of friends and contacts includes people who own everything I've mentioned. Shooting is a fairly popular hobby, even in the UK, and there are a lot of guns around.
I hesitate to mention the availability of air weapons (used for at least one murder before WW1), crossbows, and the ubiquitous pointed stick. Players will always get hold of weapons, or improvise them, and a sensible Keeper must learn to live with that fact and make their use undesireable.

Penny Love, Melbourne, Australia. As I have the rather dubious advantage of playing in the Cthulhu campaign Keepered by Mark Morrison, I should have probably written earlier to tell what it's like. Pure horror. As per normal! When us valiant Investigators aren't responsible for a variety of gruesome deaths, Mark is; people's heads have been sliced off; blown off; ripped off; their brains have been dashed out; backs broken; bodies mauled; people burnt to death - at least three for which we were inadvertently responsible; stomped on, and otherwise disposed of in a variety of unpleasant and messy ways. In the midst of all this mayhem and slaughter, and in the course of one and a half years of *real time* playing, only TWO Investigators have died, and one gone permanently insane (as in dribbling & useless - not counting phobias). Where there have been very few cases where Investigators survived by luck alone, both deaths were pretty definite - one with a pretty hefty BLOP-thwack-splop by tentacle, and the other poor sap whose death gave rise to the immortal sentence; "And you are all splattered with bits of Jeremiah".
All without too many guns - the 'bad guys' often had guns; a few Investigators managed to hang on to a gun for long or short periods of time. However if an Investigator does get hold of a nice big gun, it isn't much help to possess a weapon which you have a better chance of hitting with if you reversed it and used the stock as a club. Such circumstances are hardly likely to instill faith in yourself & your ability to face & outshoot jellied `orros with a maximum chance of emerging (relatively) unscathed.
The emotion outlined above is, I think, the main reason why Mark refuses to allow gun-use in his campaign to be governed by the known facts. It's no use to say that he under-estimates the ease with which guns could be acquired in the 1920's (or anytime) because he does, and he ignores it (we have told him how easy it was to get guns. Several times. Rather forcefully). After all, a gun, especially a NICE BIG gun, is a security blanket. It's some kind of assurance - no matter how feeble and helpless - that you can try to get THEM before They can get you. From my own experience Keepering, a person with a GUN *is* more difficult to scare with some horrors ("It's only a pulpy green thing with big eyes. Just blast both barrels"). While definitely not defending such despicable and bloody minded mode of Keepering I can see his point. In the past year & a half I've experienced a lot of soul searing terror, combined with a fair bit of cosmic awe and a lot of total helplessness in the face of an overwhelming and soulless menace. I often wished I had a gun. I have often been a good deal more scared *because* I didn't have a gun or any means of defending myself except for hand to hand combat with the variety of half bricks, pestles and canes our group kept about their person. That's the aim of the game isn't it? And if that's the way Mark wants to Keeper it, it's fine by me.

Mark Morrison. Editors don't crucify contributors, the readership does. "Shoggoths Don't Kill People" was written in a very flippant style so there were a lot of outrageous statements. However, my rationalization still holds: I prefer to educate my players not to expect to blow monsters away, but to seek other non-violent methods. This is my Keeping style, and so I catalogued some of my meaner tricks if anyone else agrees but was trying to get their players to see likewise. Neil's reply is interesting because of the violently different conclusions we draw; staying away from guns in my campaign actually keeps players alive - they run. When they have to use them, they're lousy at it, so it's more exiting. Finally, I cannot let Neil's peurile example of female investigators go by without

sneering at it - I can see the point but the illustration is ridiculous and offensive. Anyway folks, thanks for your response to the article - anybody else out there want to put their conceptions of Keeping style up for public scrutiny?

Marcus L. Rowland. regarding the Mythos on film, I suppose I might as well point out that there were a few Mythos-related concepts in Ghostbusters; in particular, the building designed to focus psychic energy will sound familiar to anyone who's read Leiber's *Our Lady of Darkness*. The Ghostbusters game certainly has a LOT of Mythos parodies; hardly surprising when you remember who designed it.

Mike D. Mason, Leics. R. Birtles letter about The Evil Dead being a 'mythos-type' film is correct in my view. The film contains an old house, a book bound in human skin, and quite an agreeable plot, to say the least of the special effects. It is interesting to note that Tom Sullivan, the film's special effects man, was originally commissioned to do the pre-production artwork for the Cry of Cthulhu film. As well as being asked to do the art for the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook.

((Yes, it was actually Sullivan who designed and built the "Book of the Dead" prop in the same film, and I understand that he illustrated it too! Your mention of Sullivan having worked on The Cry of Cthulhu has made me realise that in fact, I forgot to credit the illustration in issue 12 from the page 25 which came from the original Sullivan story boards for the same movie!))

Steve Hatherley, Devon. The Cthulhu on TV seemed a little limited. There must be other programmes featuring, or influenced by, HPL. Take Dr. Who, for instance. Don't the Sea Devils bear a remarkable resemblance to Deep Ones? When the Silurians (Serpent People?) appeared, the first cavers to see them went insane:- scrabbling feverishly on their cell walls... There are other stories too:- The Awakening had an old Thing in a church feeding off the villagers' hate and violence; The Seeds of Doom finished with a huge, many tentacled Krinoid sitting on the stately home of a flower-mad maniac. Then of course I'm forgetting the Giant Spiders, the huge octopid horror lurking in the lake, the Zygons, the Autons (now that was a scary bunch), the Axons...
Onto a different programme, do you know anything about an American series entitled Shadowchasers? I understand that it is something about investigators and the unusual, but that's all.

((Shadowchasers? Can't say I do, perhaps one of our American Cthulhoids can help us here))

Mark Morrison. Well, Re-Animator made it here. It was not surprisingly rated R, meaning for restricted audiences, viz those under 2 or over 18 (there must be some sick 1½ year olds out there). If there were any cuts I didn't notice them - we got the exploding body and the naked girl scene (although Richard claims that Dr. Hill produces a foot-long tongue in the uncut version, ((no he doesn't - ed)) West arrives just before Dr. Hill can, er, consummate his passion). One strange cut though, was the classroom scene. Hill had taken the scalp off the body and pulled out the brain, and West had broken one pencil and had picked up the next, when suddenly it jumped to Hill saying "It will be a pleasure to fail you" and storming out; can you think of a reason why that part was missing?

((Yes, the version you obviously saw was the version released to several countries which had a lot of the humour cut out! In the uncut version West breaks the pencil twice. The first occassion pops up following Hill's outdated statement concerning the fact that the brain dies following the ceasing of the heartbeat. And again (just as your film cut back to Hill) this time snapping the pencil more abruptly. This got a roar of laughter from the crowd where I attended, and the original version then has Hill mutter "Mr. West I suggest you buy yourself a pen!" Why this bit was cut is a little odd, I believe some countries film distributor's opted for the "straight-horror" version, believing that a black-comedy was a little above the understanding of its public. Nothing can be further from the truth in my opinion. Hill's "It will be a pleasure to fail you" was an over-dub by someone else. Incidentally, regarding your former query on the censorship of the "sex" scene, the uncut version has West arrive *after* the headless Hill can er, "consummate his passion" as you so delicately put it. Once again it looks like another case of the censor saying "Let's annoy the public" which is bad enough over here, but at least we got to see the humour in our version.))

Iain Smedley, Herts. Tim Ellis's ideas for "adventurers' clubs" are, though perhaps rather corny, very useful in the game setting. Firstly, they can provide a number of 'natural' social contacts, who can be 'tags' onto further adventures (you know, the "friend of one of the party" idea), and also provide skilled help with the players' problems (eg archaeology & anthropology). Secondly, it helps the compromise between social gaming and single-player realism. The 'club' idea means that single-player adventurers can happen easily, but on occassion larger groups can be used without hiccups in the campaign world. The 'club' can be made more subtle in many ways, and is an idea I will certainly develop in my own campaign.

(Continued on page 24).

CONTRIBUTING CORPSES

Ramsey Campbell, Guy Cowlishaw, R. A. Davey, Carl Ford, S. J. Hatherley, Peter F. Jeffery, Mark Morrison, Sandy Petersen, Robert M. Price, Andrew Whittaker.

- abominable authors.

Dave Carson, Ralph Horsley, S. J. Hatherley.

- deleterious drawings.

DAGON #15 will be available in November and will contain the first printing of Brian Lumley's "Return to Arkham" specially adapted for comic strip form and illustrated by Martin McKenna, "Mythos Names and How to Pronounce Them", an illuminating essay compiled for *DAGON* readers by Mythos scholar Robert M. Price, "Wings in the Night", Mythos fiction from Edward P. Berglund, a new *Call of Cthulhu* scenario by Andy Bennison, all the regular horrors and much worse. Price 80p.

Call of Cthulhu is a role-playing game set within the fictional worlds created by H. P. Lovecraft and the Mythos circle writers & published by CHAOSIUM INC., P.O. Box 6302 Albany, CA 94706, USA. And also produced under license in the UK by GAMES WORKSHOP LTD.

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CTHULHOID NOTICES

WANTED:- DAGON 1-10, Good price paid. Are there any other *Call of Cthulhu* players in the Lothian area. If so please contact the address below for scenario trades, or even for a game. *David Barras, 4 Forrester Road, Armadale, Lothian, Scotland .*

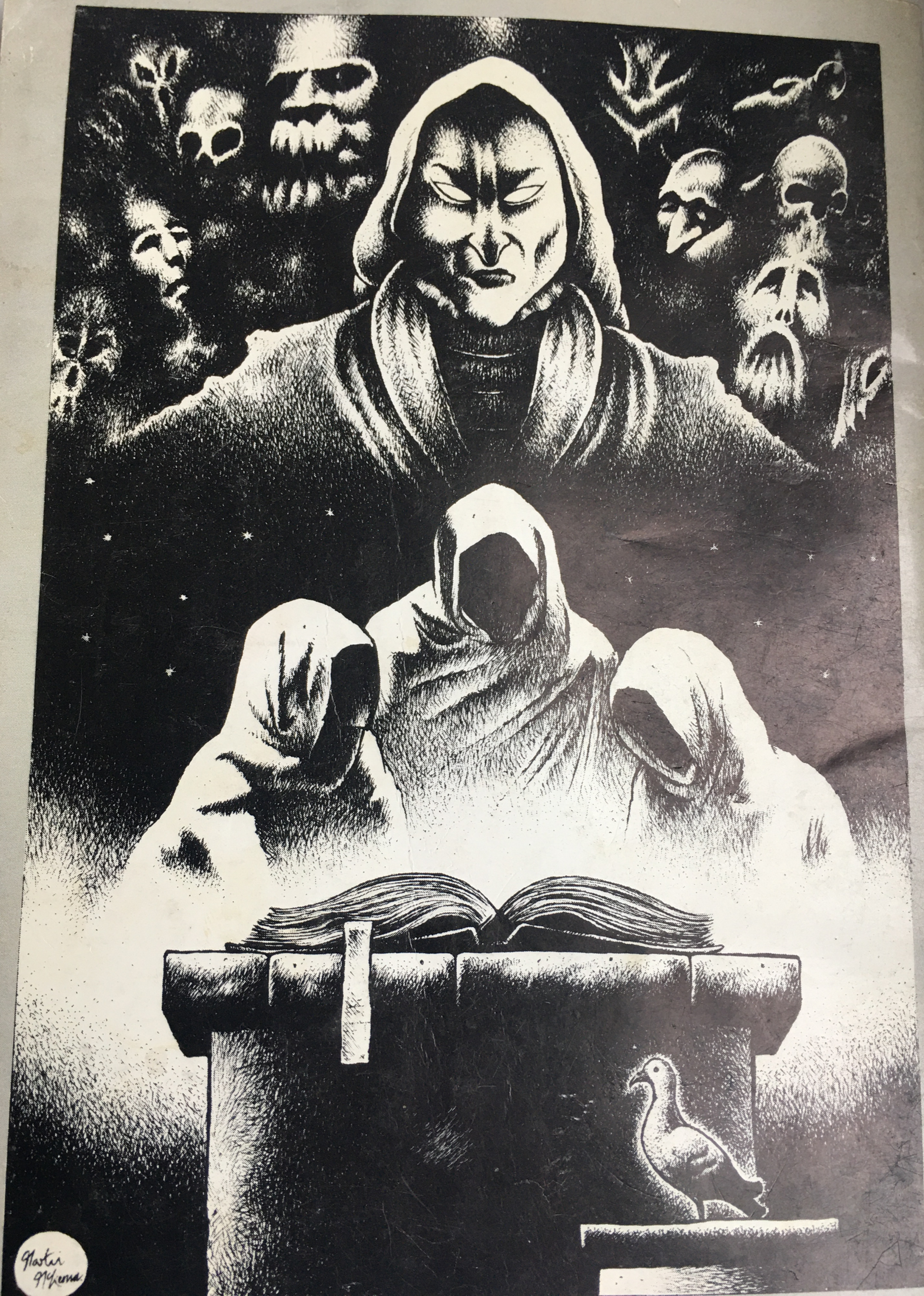
FOR SALE - CHEEP CHEEP, as a bird might say. AD&D, CoC, RQ II, FRG aids, mags & zines. SAE to:-
Andy Jackson, 43 Sparrows Herne, Basildon, Essex SS16 5HW.

LES TENTACULES ASSOCIES, the French company which produces a number of Cthulhoid gaming material has a new address:-

LES TENTACULES ASSOCIES, 3 bis, rue Casteres, 92110-CLICHY. France.

News on the Cthulhoid front includes the completion of From Beyond from the company that gave us Re-Animator. Due for a 1987 release in the UK.

CHAOSIUM in the pipeline Things include an as-yet-untitled supplement by Mark Morrison & Penny Love which covers, you guessed it, Australia. Sandy wanted to call the pack "Cthulhu Down Under" but this was sniggered at by the two writers, who have hit back with "Terra-Australis" (geddit), my money's on the latter. Cover art, writing etc is all done and it should be out by the end of the year.

Other planned releases include a 1980's supplement and a collection based around various Great Old Ones.

Games Workshop have "Statue of the Sorcerer back to back with The vanishing Conjurer. Out of space, bye.....